School of Theology at Claremont
1001 1369511

The Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

COMMUNION ADDRESSES

257.5
A1
C6

COMMUNION ADDRESSES

BY

REPRESENTATIVE PREACHERS

EDITED BY
FREDERICK J. NORTH
EDITOR OF "HARVEST THANKSGIVING SERMONS"
"LIFE'S BEGINNINGS," ETC.

LONDON
JAMES CLARKE & CO. LIMITED
9 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.2
(LATE OF 13 AND 14 FLEET STREET, E.C.)

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

Printed in Great Britain.

PREFACE

THE success which attended the publication last year of the volume of Harvest Thanksgiving Sermons has induced the publishers to issue the present volume of Communion Addresses, in the hope that it will prove equally useful, especially as there are very few books available on this subject.

CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. Arch. Alexander, B.D., St. John's Wood.

Rev. James Black, M.A., D.D., Edinburgh.

Rev. J. Golder Burns, B.D., Glasgow.

Rev. J. T. Forbes, D.D., Glasgow.

Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A., D.C.L., Marylebone.

Rev. Principal H. Maldwyn Hughes, D.D., Cambridge.

Rev. Norman Maclean, D.D., Edinburgh.

Rev. George H. Morrison, D.D., Glasgow.

Rev. James Reid, M.A., Eastbourne.

Rev. Professor James Alexander Robertson, D.D., Aberdeen.

Rev. Hubert L. Simpson, M.A., Glasgow.

Rev. Lauchlan MacLean Watt, D.D., Glasgow Cathedral.

CONTENTS

PAGE

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO? - - - - - 13
ARCH. ALEXANDER, B.D.

GOD OUT IN THE OPEN - - - - - - 27
JAMES BLACK, M.A., D.D.

THIS IN REMEMBRANCE - - - - - 39
J. GOLDER BURNS, B.D.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED - - - - - - - 53
J. T. FORBES, D.D.

THE SUCCOUR OF THE SACRAMENT - 69
R. C. GILLIE, M.A., D.C.L.

THE MARKS OF JESUS - - - - - - 85
PRINCIPAL H. MALDWYN HUGHES, D.D.

THE PRESENCE - - - - - - - - 99
NORMAN MACLEAN, D.D.

COMMUNION AND SERVICE: BEFORE COMMUNION; AFTER COMMUNION - 113
GEORGE H. MORRISON, D.D.

WHERE CHRIST IS CLEARLY SEEN - 129
JAMES REID, M.A.

CONTENTS

PAGE

THE PRIESTLINESS OF INNOCENCE - 149
PROF. JAMES ALEXANDER ROBERTSON, D.D.

THE CONQUEST OF THE CUP - - - 167
HUBERT L. SIMPSON, M.A.

WHAT MEAN YE? - - - - - - - 181
LAUCHLAN MACLEAN WATT, D.D.

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

By Arch. Alexander, B.D.,
St. John's Wood Presbyterian Church.

"Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

John vi. 68.

To Whom Shall We Go?

This is a strange form of confession, a question that searches the horizon round and then returns like a dove to the ark, because there is no sure foothold anywhere else. Yet there is no disloyalty to Christ even in the form of it. Jesus compels nobody. He offers Himself, in His life and love and character, to the unfettered judgment of men, and the only homage He cares for is that which is freely offered.

But it is the very form of the confession that speaks to some of us, and to all, I imagine, at some time or other. For there are times when the surest way to bind oneself more firmly and loyally to some high and worthy allegiance is to cast even a momentary glance at the alternatives. When the fight of faith is hard, it clears a man's spirit and sets his feet upon a rock just to imagine how it would be if he were on the opposite side, under another leader. That is one reason why the book which deliberately miscalls or belittles

Christ never does so much harm as might be supposed. For we are somehow never so sure of Christ, so sure that He is the altogether lovely One, and God's Last Word for us, as when we read or hear His supremacy being lightly called in question. Our faith may not be to us all it might be, and the word to describe our religious experience may be Henry Drummond's word "slipshod," and, as we sit at His Table, the uppermost confession of our hearts may be of our poor and halting discipleship. But we have only to state the alternative—What if there were no Christ at all?—to recoil in a sudden realization of all the precious things Jesus Christ does mean even to us, and, with a new ardour, to give our thanks to God for His inestimable gift.

To whom shall we go? The implication is that we must go somewhere, that we are not sufficient unto ourselves. The ocean of life and experience is large and stormy, full of hidden rocks and racing currents, and our barque is small and frail. We need help; often we need comfort; and every day we need mercy. We need, as even the pagan thinker saw, some

"strong word of God" to hold on to. More, we need some One to hold on to us.

Peter is tacitly confessing the need of all the children of men. It is not in man to direct his steps. Our own strength and wisdom are not sufficient for us. To whom shall we go? In every one of us, need is speaking these words.

If some being from another world were to look down on this ant-heap of a city of ours, any Sunday morning, he would find us all *going somewhere*—some to worship and pray, some to discuss the popular philosophies and nostrums of the day, some to engage in sport or pleasure, and some to seek in evil their good, but all of us impelled by some inward dissatisfaction or sense of incompleteness, seeking deliverance from our burdens or from ourselves, tacitly asking to be lifted out of our bondage, looking this way and that for happiness, satisfaction or peace, and every one of us, in some fashion or other, declaring our essential dependence. We *must* go somewhere. There is no doubt about that. The question is Where? To whom shall we go?

If not to the God and Father whom Jesus has

revealed, what are the alternatives? A whole long list of them in our day—rationalism, spiritualism, agnosticism, theosophy, Christian science, and such like. And, perhaps, the most popular of them all, epicureanism, or merely "having a good time."

But even if he had known of these competing gospels, so-called, Peter puts them all out of court with one word. For he did not say to what shall we go? but to whom? And there is a whole world of difference between the two. You can never set a What against a Whom. They belong to two different kingdoms, like a stone and a flower. And all these "isms," for all the truth or goodness that there may be in them, are on the plane of What. They are doctrines, systems, abstract truths—merely things. And much as they may help in their own way and sphere—for we need not deny that they have any worth whatsoever—there is a bottom need of the human spirit which they can never touch, a salvation they can never accomplish. When we were little and sick, it was not motherhood we cried for, but our own mother. When we are wandered, perplexed,

despairing, it is not courage or right thinking or "poise" we need so much as a guide, a helper, a friend. Sinners as we are, it is not salvation we are seeking, but a Saviour. God has made us so that no mere thing, but only a *person* can minister to our deepest need.

Peter had learned that for himself, and doubtless chose his word quite deliberately. For he had been living in the closest intimacy with the most wonderful Person the world has ever seen. Though he could not tell it fully, he knew, in his own experience, what that Person had been to him, as Teacher and Friend and Lord. In the daily life and holy love of Jesus, in the wonder and perfectness of His spirit, in the graciousness and awe and utter satisfaction of His fellowship, Peter felt that he had seen the very glory of God. The undreamed-of grace of God had come to Peter through the person of Jesus Christ. Peter could get no higher than that, nor can we. Because God and religion and everything good, for Peter, meant Jesus Christ, he could never take lower ground. If he was to go out on the quest again, it must be for another person. To whom, not to what?

Why is it that we have come here this morning, and gathered in contrite expectation and desire around this Table of the Lord? Is it because our fathers and mothers guided our feet into this Way in the days of our youth? Is it because the Church has nurtured us, and taught us, and brought us to this hour? Or because the New Testament sets this before us as our Christian privilege? All of these reasons are good, but no one of them is good enough. The real reason of our coming is that in this Sacrament we draw near to the highest and divinest we know or can imagine. We do this in remembrance of Jesus, beside whom there is no other. We know or can imagine no greater love than that of a man who lays down his life for his friends, and it is that love that has drawn us here. The faith of Jesus Christ has not only endured but grown and spread down the centuries because it is the best that men have heard of or can conceive. The Kingdom comes, because there is not anything on earth that is of greater worth. And our Sacrament is venerable, not because of the Christian centuries behind it, but because the Good News which it enshrines,

that good news which is Jesus Christ, is the very best news in the world. The goodness of our Lord is not supreme because it is Christian, but because it is such goodness. Set it anywhere, and it would still be supreme. To whom, then, if we turn from Him, shall we go? It is not a question of What else? but of Who else is there?

We know that it was not Jesus who first taught men to pray. There was an instinct of prayer in the hearts of God's children centuries before Christ. Yet it is the simple truth that Jesus made prayer an entirely new thing when He taught us, after Him, to say, "Our Father in Heaven." For those who have even begun to realize something of what God's Fatherhood means, there is no more blessed or precious truth in the world. If with the fickle crowd we also turn away from Him, to whom shall we go who will show us a more gracious God than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Although it is true that, ages before Jesus came, the sons of men were reaching out wistfully in hope of some life beyond this, yet it is literally He who has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. He who did certainly

die is as certainly alive and moving men and women in the world to-day. Jesus Himself, in the grace of His life, in His flawless goodness, in the passion of His love for men, is a treasure of such peerless and inestimable value that it is practically unthinkable that the Universe, the scheme of things that could produce such a personal value, could not conserve it. Because Jesus was what He was, this earth-plane is too small to hold Him. And it was He Himself who said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." It is with a new assurance, therefore, ever since He dwelt among us, that the sad and sorrowful have looked to Him and seen a blessed hope shining ahead. To whom shall we go when the black procession stands at our door, and an open grave is waiting for what is dearest in our life? Who else but He has a "word of eternal life"?

And these are but two of many ways in which we can try to tell what Jesus means for the world, and even for ourselves. To make the story complete, we should have to include the whole of Christian literature, biography, poetry, and art, the history of the Church, the testimony of all

His followers, and the record of every beneficent enterprise that has been inspired by His spirit. And that is a tale so vast that we may say with the Apostle that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

But for us, gathered here about this Table, there is something that sums all that up, and focuses it in one burning point of revelation, making the very thought of comparison with any other impossible, namely the Cross of Christ, His love unto the death for His brethren. It is in the Cross that the whole spirit of Christ's life comes to its peak and summit. It gathers up into one last, utter giving what every day held of passionate caring for men. When He saw what it was going to cost Him to stand by those whom He loved, He might have turned back. For even love, as we know it, has its limits; it cannot pour itself out continually, only to meet indifference, suspicion or hate in return. When our love is constantly ill-requited and spurned, or when the cost seems to be passing all bounds, it surrenders its object, and, albeit sorrowfully, turns back alone. But there were no limits to the love of Christ. He went on, all the hard

cruel road, despised and rejected, spit upon, scourged, crucified, because He loved men so, and by His love alone would win them to Him, and the Kingdom and to God. When Christ's love for men asked of Him, in the end, all that even He had to give, He gave it willingly, "for the joy set before Him."

What is God like? men ask. And the question is of infinite moment for us all, if it can be answered. Here, at the Cross of Christ, is to be discerned that wonderful answer which is the heart of the Christian Gospel—God is like that, like Jesus, who would rather die the cruel death of the Cross than stop loving His brethren out of their ignorance and unhappiness and sin to God, His Father and theirs. The Cross of Christ shows us more than the love of Jesus of Nazareth, it shows us God. This is the God with Whom we have to do, Who gave us the trust of life, to Whom we return when we have spent it; this is the only God there is, the God who in Jesus is calling and seeking all His children of men, the God who "was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

But where now is Peter's question? Which

of us can echo it, once we have seen, even in the dimmest fashion, what Peter at that time could not discern, the perfect, holy, heart-breaking love of the Christ who bore the Cross? We frame no more questions about "going," after that. Instead, we come. We come here, to worship and bow our heads, and let this redeeming, reviving, enabling Love of Christ into our needy hearts and lives. We seek our God no more, for here, at the Cross of Christ, we find Him, and He finds us. This is the heart of the Eternal. This is what God is like, and this is the measure of His caring. Here, in our Sacrament, His love meets us again, and waits again for our answer. What shall we render unto the Lord?

We will take the cup . . . and call upon His Name. We will say of Him and to Him, My Lord and my God. There is no other. There can be no other. "None other hope in heaven or earth or sea. . . . None, beside Thee."

GOD OUT IN THE OPEN

By James Black, M.A., D.D.,
Edinburgh.

"*And, behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain.*" Matt. xxvii. 51.

God Out in the Open

This difficult passage describes some strange happenings which accompanied or followed our Lord's death on the Cross. The most natural conjecture is to suppose that one of those alarming earthquakes, so common in the East and often so destructive, visited Jerusalem and its neighbourhood about this time. The event made such a deep and vivid impression on the minds of Christs's people that for ever afterwards they associated the two things intimately together, regarding them even as cause and effect—His death on Calvary and the nerve-shaking upheaval which accompanied the earthquake. Some people, more matter-of-fact, might regard the visitation as a strange coincidence, a kind of divine accident which, happening at the time it did, made its memory more indelible and its significance more remarkable. As always, on such alarming occasions, there were many wild and hectic tales and considerable unconscious

exaggeration ; but in any case it can be easily understood that people, then as now, should see in all these *outré* events the direct finger of God.

There is always something to be said for the people who deliberately rule *chance* out of this world. In a universe under God's laws there are no "accidents!" We sometimes speak of chance and coincidence in a way that amounts to a subtle denial of law and God. If you and I are going to have any true idea of the world as an ordered thing, under the presidency of laws natural and divine, the one thing we can never speak of is *chance*.

Among the strange incidents which happened at this time was one which, by its religious significance, fired the imagination of the disciples like a revelation. The veil of the Temple which secluded the Holy of Holies and shut it off from the gaze of ordinary worshippers, was either violently thrust aside or torn into two. This occurrence, simple and natural in itself, was hailed by the receptive minds of the disciples as a symbol and token, full of eternal meanings. Even if they took the incident as a "coincidence," it was a remarkable one; but the spiritual vision of

Christ's followers led them to welcome it as a symbol and message, unique for them and all the ages.

What lay behind this symbol for the disciples? We know what the great Temple represented, and especially what the Veil typified. In that holy building was focused all the past and the future of Jewish worship. It was the material symbol of God's ancient covenant with men. Their hopes of forgiveness and any possibility of true communion with God centred in the rites which were performed in this place. The priests of God went back and forward to the altar and offered sacrifices for the sin of man. Behind the Veil was the Holy of Holies, where was the mercy-seat with the ark of the covenant, the place that God inhabited—so sacred that the High Priest alone was permitted to approach, not without sacrifice of blood, and only once a year. For there, behind the Veil, God Himself dwelt—a God unapproachable, distant, awful—a God whom men must fear, into whose intimate presence no ordinary man dare come.

. . . . . .

"*And now*," said the disciples, "*the veil of the Temple is rent in twain*." Jesus has come;

Jesus has lived ; Jesus has died. The ancient covenant and the ancient religion are gone for ever. No longer must men approach God in this indirect and artificial way. The Jewish religion has served its day, in God's good providence ; but now there is opened up a new and glorious way. For Christ has come and Christ has died—and lo, *the veil of the Temple is rent for ever.*

"An accident," you say. Then a divine accident. "An accident," you say. Then a holy and magnificent symbol. A symbol at least that Jesus by His life and death has superseded the past for ever.

> Ring out the old, ring in the new :
> Ring in the Christ that is to be.

I

Without any doubt, though they did not see it fully at the moment, this symbol meant for the disciples that *the day of Judaism was done.*

In believing this, they do not minimize or decry what the religion of the Jews had stood for. Far from it !—they were devout Jews themselves. They had gloried in that Temple

and in the true religion of God which it represented. Often in past days had they found peace there. They had brought their little sacrifices and had offered them in love; and had departed for home with the blessing of God in their hearts. A good man who has seen a new truth is the last one in the world to despise the old truth which once brought blessedness to his soul!

But they saw that the old Temple service and the narrow Jewish religion were but a shadow of what Jesus had now made real. When the perfect thing comes, the imperfect must go. How imperfect that Temple ritual was! If a man came longing, as the heart of man must long, for a true vision of God and a true communion, what did he get in this Temple service? He found, at the outset, that he needed a "go-between," an official priest who could alone represent him to his Father. He himself could never know God, see God, or hold the direct communion with God that his soul desired. Between him and the Father was that mystic yet real Veil that shut him out from an Almighty who was unapproachable by the ordinary seeker. . . . Then there were the paltry sacrifices he

brought! What could these do? They were a beautiful symbol, no doubt, of repentance and forgiveness; but could he never experience the loving voice of God speaking directly to his own soul? Must he always stand afar off? Must these priests ever be the one and only go-between? Must God ever be a God of fear and awe and reverence? . . . The soul of man, my brother, is the same in all ages; and I assure you that your soul does not long more for intimate communion with God than did the soul of devout Jews centuries ago. But to them there was only the dim Temple; the pathetic little sacrifices, lying in their hands; the official priests; and as an emblem of it all, that heavy thick veil, a curtain that shut them out cruelly from the presence of the Father.

But the Veil was rent in twain. . . . He would be a man of little spiritual vision who could not find in that fact the glorious symbol which gladdened the hearts of these disciples. As they thought both of Jesus and the rent veil, they cried, "This is God's new day: the old has passed." Surely, we may join in their gladness.

II

In this strange happening, the disciples also saw a clear proof that *Jesus had gathered up and perfected in Himself the best that lay in the past.*

It is foolish, and inaccurate, to think that the early Christians considered the Jewish religion a defeated and useless thing. Rather did they *continue* it in Jesus, for they considered Him the completion, the promised crown, of it all. The past was done, not because the old was bad, but because the new was better. The religion of Jesus was not some new and startling thing that flouted the old, but something that grew out of and perfected the old. Jesus Himself was the crown of all prophecy and the consummation of all history. He preached no new God, but the same God drawn near. He preached no new communion, but the old communion made intimate and direct. It was no new gospel of forgiveness He declared, but the old forgiveness made thorough and personal. It was no new priesthood He preached, but the old priesthood made ours in the priesthood of all believers—a soul coming to God but coming as its own priest.

And in a true sense, it was no new gospel He preached, but the eternal gospel of the love and Fatherhood of God made complete in the sacrifice of His own body. "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil."

Thus, when the disciples took that rent veil as a symbol, it was not because they believed that Christ's message was something new, displacing the old as a machine of new design displaces an antiquated instrument, but because they regarded Christ as the flower, the crown, the perfection of all the past. He gathered up in Himself the ancient longings of men and women, all the hopes and aspirations of the eternal human heart.

III

In this symbol of the rent veil, the disciples saw that the Master nevertheless had given *a new start and a new hope in the world's history.*

In Jesus they saw that at last God had come out into the open! He was fully "seen of men," seen by the eye of the simplest worshipper. In past days Jehovah had dwelt within that concealing curtain, and had been shrouded from

the world, as something too terrible and awesome for the sinful eyes of men. But in Jesus all the man-made restrictions were torn aside and God's Holy of Holies was open to the gaze of all wistful souls. There was no longer any need of that elaborate Temple ritual—neither the priest, nor the sacrifice, nor the mysterious veil. From this time, any soul that came in Jesus' name had the right of immediate and personal entrance.

The veil was rent: and with it went the priest, the sacrifice, and the mystery. All that remained was the simple and gracious mystery of the love of God. All other mysteries were lost in that perfect one.

Thus, at last, God had come out into the open. Since then, there is no longer anything "esoteric" in religion; and there is no longer any blessed company of the "initiated," who in secret ways or behind veils can claim to know glorious mysteries withheld from others! God has come out into the open. . . . I cannot help remembering that it was on a little hill, where all the world could see Him, that Jesus made His final sacrifice. Out in the open, I tell you, under the skies of God.

If the work of Jesus means anything, it means surely the *nearness*, the *intimacy*, and the *personal contact* of the seeking soul with the seeking God. To the Jews, God was in His heaven : and at best some mysterious Presence dwelt furtively behind that veil. But to us, by the work of Jesus, God dwells on this earth—here with us—in our hearts. He is ours ; and we are His.

. . . . . .

In this sacrament of Holy Communion, we enter to-day within that rent veil. God is now with us, a Real Presence. We greet Him not with fear but with a holy boldness in Jesus, for we enter not as into the presence of a Potentate, but as into the love of a Father. We have the assurance of Jesus, our High Priest, in Whose Name we shall receive welcome, peace, forgiveness, and a New Life.

The Spirit and the Bride say, Come :
Let him that heareth say, Come :
And let him that is athirst Come :
And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

THIS IN REMEMBRANCE

By J. Golder Burns, B.D.,
Glasgow.

"*This do in remembrance of Me.*"

1 Cor. xi. 24.

This in Remembrance

Teachableness is a praiseworthy Christian grace, but the very emphasis which the New Testament lays upon it witnesses to man's besetting proneness to ask questions, and notwithstanding the oft-repeated injunction that we are to come to the Lord's Table not to propound difficulties but to accept in a spirit of trust that which the occasion has to offer, it is impossible even here to restrain the activities of the enquiring mind. If not actually at the Table, probably before coming to it, and certainly soon after leaving it, the communicant has to confront the questionings which may be checked but cannot be wholly silenced. Perhaps even now someone is asking such elementary questions as these—"What is the Lord's Supper?" and "Why should I observe it?" Another, it may be, frames his enquiries in such words as these—"What are the special benefits that proceed from its observance?" and "How best may I prepare myself

for participation in them?" And still another, of a more reflective order of mind, is asking why it is that the Holy Table is always overshadowed by solemn thoughts of our Lord's Cross and Passion.

Now one does not profess to be the possessor of an illuminant which will leave no aspect of the subject in deep shadow. Mystery has its message, and the mysterious is ever with us. But there is mystery which is by Divine permission, and there is mystery which is of human negligence. And while the former is to be approached reverently and used to the Divine glory, the latter is to be faced boldly, and, if possible, dispelled.

With this latter end in view it is good to remember that while Holy Scripture abounds in difficulties it seldom fails to answer its own baffling questions. There are many people whose acquaintance with the Bible is limited merely to the problems it raises. Perplexed and annoyed, they lose patience and fling the Book aside. On the other hand, if only they persevered, they would doubtless discover that to all Bible puzzles there are the appropriate

Bible solutions. Let us patiently follow this method now.

What is the Lord's Supper? The reply is in our text. Our Lord refers to the Sacrament as "This." What is "This"? In simple language it is that which the Saviour and His disciples were doing at the time. "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them and said, Take, eat: this is My Body." Likewise the Cup. Putting it simply, but we trust with all reverence, we suggest that, within view of the end, our Lord was concerned about the time, quickly drawing near, when the disciples should be alone, and knowing the foibles of the human spirit, and not unmindful of the shortness in human experience of the step from "out of sight" to "out of mind," He allowed Himself to follow the ordinary procedure of leaving a memento. Just as a departing friend, anticipating the future, and unwilling to be forgotten, places in the loved one's hand some simple souvenir, so with a like motive and in a fashion not dissimilar the King of Glory came to the rescue of the human weakness of His chosen Twelve. He selected that

which engaged their attention at the moment. "Whenever," He virtually declared, "whenever you repeat this act, do it while deliberately thinking of Me." The Lord's Supper is thus a Memorial. I do not say simply a memorial, for it is not suggested that there are not other implications. As we know, the Holy Festival is called by a variety of names, all beautiful, and all carrying a gracious significance, such names as Eucharist, Sacrament and Communion. There is likewise a variety of doctrines of the sacred Institution from the simplest to the most involved. But in religion we cannot possibly fall into error so long as we build upon a truth which the human intellect can readily grasp; and, however far we may proceed in Christian experience and knowledge, let us not forget that the Lord's Supper is primarily and essentially a Memorial of Christ.

But may we not with equal cogency use the word "Pictorial"? And is not this the answer of Scripture to the question why our worship round the Table is always shadowed by thoughts of our Saviour's Passion? Speaking in a detached way we might suggest that a form of

memorial could have been chosen other than the bread and wine selected by our Lord. But that which He did assume He adopted with a special intention. The Bread is broken ; His Body was to be broken. The Wine is poured out ; His Blood was to be shed. If then one asks why thoughts of Christ's Death overshadow the Table, the form of the Memorial which Jesus adopted provides an all-sufficient reply. Christ deliberately instituted the Supper as a pictorial expression of His Death for our Salvation, not of His Ministry and Teaching, and not of His Sinless Character, but of His Sacrificial Death.

This of course is a deep, almost an impenetrable, mystery, and certainly one which is not to be cheaply exposed in a few easily-made sentences. But here at the Holy Table let us remind ourselves for our encouragement that the Death of our Lord as the agency of man's Salvation is accepted by the Church Universal as the central article of the Christian Faith. If there were seated round this Table to-day representatives of the leading branches of the Christian Church, let us say, the Archbishop of

Canterbury, the Presidents of the Wesleyan Conference and the Congregational Union, the Moderators of Presbyterianism and even the Holy Father of Rome, these venerable leaders might shake their heads sadly over propositions that might be advanced bearing on Ritual, Dogma and Church Government. But if one of these fathers solemnly said, "The Blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin," everyone would bow assent and breathe a fervent "Amen."

There are many ways in which we may make tolerably intelligible to our minds the doctrine of the Saving Efficacy of the Death of Christ. We may regard it as projecting an Ideal, as whispering a message of Forgiveness, or as disengaging a Moral Dynamic for the reinforcement of our weak and wayward wills. "That sight," as the New Testament poignantly refers to the Crucifixion, may carry us far on the way towards Salvation by merely bringing us down from the false heights of self-sufficiency to that level of humility on which alone God is prepared to treat with us. But when all our explanations have been offered and have but

proved our utter inability to make plain that which God Himself has left hidden, there is still left for us in the place of Christ's Death in human experience a wonderful opportunity for the exercise of patient tolerance.

And why should we not be ready to show forbearance on this deep mystery of the Faith? If a brother-Christian has been in the enemy's country a prisoner, and in Christ's Death has been brought home, and so calls Jesus his "Ransom," who are we to forbid him the right to make such a testimony? Or the man or woman who has been sensibly under God's wrath and curse, but is now through the Saviour's Death at peace with Him, and on that account speaks of that Death as an "Expiation"—what right has anyone to question this description? Or the convert whose experience is that Jesus in His Dying did something for him which he could not do for himself, calling Him his "Substitute"; or the saved castaway, looking at the cleanness of his robes and recalling like a haunting nightmare their former pollution, testifying with a note of triumph that he has been "washed in the Blood of the Lamb"—by what

right, native or acquired, dare we disparage such a witness? No, at the Lord's Table, hearkening to the Master's own words, "My Body" and "My Blood," let us humbly have respect to our brother's experience, and lose sight for the moment of all theorizing in the indwelling fact—"I lay my burden down at the Cross, I need never feel it more."

Why we should observe the Lord's Supper, what those benefits are which we may receive at the Lord's Table, and what preparation may be considered worthy of such a holy privilege, are likewise questions that may be answered by the implications of Christ's own words. As a rule it is taken for granted that the command of a superior officer is given to be obeyed. The Captain of our Salvation at this crisis in His career is not making a suggestion, or expressing a desire, or tabling a proposal which we may discuss with Him in conference. He commands. Apart therefore from the benefits to be received at Holy Communion, the note of authority in the warrant ought to leave no option to the "good soldier of Jesus Christ."

But those indubitable benefits protect the

Saviour's instructions from any possible criticism of unreasonableness. There is no joy like Eucharistic joy. There is no atmosphere to be compared with that of Holy Communion. There is no solemnity to be laid alongside of that which gathers round the Sacrament. Believers are confirmed in their faith as they unite around the Holy Table. Personal religious impressions so apt to be worn away by the traffic of time across our spirits are here re-inscribed. The communicant is saluted by all the Saints. And here, as nowhere else, does the world discover the solidarity of the Church, and its invulnerability to every hostile attack.

Why is it of supreme importance that the participator should be altogether in the spirit of the occasion? Because, freighted with glorious possibility though the Communion is, even such a transcendent event may be rendered nugatory by man's negligence. One of the most startling declarations within the covers of the New Testament is that by St. Paul, that even as a guest at Christ's Table a man may receive not blessing but judgment to himself. Such a statement is calculated to give us pause. For it

virtually disclaims anything of a sacrosanct nature in the Communion by itself, and proclaims that the determining factor is that state of mind which the communicant brings with him to the celebration. He does not even admit that an unworthy participation may merely leave matters as they were, no better or no worse, but he declares, without a shadow of ambiguity, that man's culpability may degrade an Institution set up by the Son of God Himself from its glorious function of ministering Divine Grace to the lamentable office of working spiritual hurt. What a responsibility to avoid such a terrible indictment !

But our Saviour's words in their all-completeness furnish the blessed secret of partaking worthily. There is many a holy reminder which we may carry with us to good purpose to the Banqueting Hall. " First gird thyself and serve, and afterward thou mayest eat and drink." Many do not enjoy or benefit from food because desire is absent, and appetite is often lacking because one has not laboured. And there are many whose desire for the provision of the Holy Table is feeble because they are not living for

truth and toiling for righteousness in the business of the Kingdom of God. "Let us keep the Feast not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice or wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Any serious declension from the lofty ethical standard of the Christian life is a serious barrier to the outflow of Communion Grace. But the programme of preparation is consummated in the Saviour's word "Remembrance." What does it mean? It means a deliberate recalling of the Teaching and Character, but especially of the Passion, of our Lord—how He voluntarily offered Himself for and in the place of man; the dolorous unfolding of these heart-rending events which culminated in the world's central tragedy—the Betrayal, the Agony in the Garden, the mockery of the Trial, the Scourging, the Crown of Thorns, the Bearing of His Cross, the Crucifixion, the Death. "Remembrance of Me" Christ demands, not any mere facile conformity with a recurring convention, not the heaving of an elegant sigh, or the starting tear all too readily evoked, but Remembrance, Remembrance, and ever Remembrance, until a

tremor of reality strikes to the deeps of our being, and borne forward by an irrepressible surge of gratitude, devotion, resolution and consecration, we cast ourselves once again upon the bosom of the Son of God, "Who loved me and gave Himself for me"

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

By J. T. Forbes, D.D.,
Glasgow.

Christ Crucified

The ordinances of Jesus enshrine foundation truth. One marks the passage from the old life to the new; the other speaks of that fellowship of dependence and bestowal by which that life maintains itself and grows. We "proclaim the Lord's death." Christ crucified is the theme of an enacted sermon. The institution fastens on what is central—the Divine passion by which we are redeemed. It is a perpetual witness to the fact which, with all its implications, is the heart of the Gospel.

The language of some symbols may be difficult of interpretation; the language of this symbol is plain. Only speech of simple dignity befits the Gospel. Our Lord's own words have depths of meaning never yet fully sounded; nevertheless in themselves they are utterly plain, it is rather their range and application that we have to learn. We see truly, though not fully, their significance. So with St. Paul; in the matters of the soul, he used

"great plainness of speech." His claim was that he was the vehicle, rather than the framer of the form, of his testimony. His witness, in a word, was not so much testimony concerning God as testimony which God bore. The matter was urgent, and when one has something pressing to say, it is not the time for elaboration. Importance makes for simplicity. When a house has caught fire people do not lean from the window and say with great calmness to the passers-by: "A conflagration has commenced in this edifice"; they shout, "Fire." Skilful and ornate utterance would have been easy to the apostle, but when he is writing about the Lord's Supper, his mind is still full of revolt against the flippant and frivolous spirit which, as he had found in Athens three years before, could treat the Gospel as matter for light comment, and speech must be sure and plain. The humanist is forgotten in the evangelist, the rhetorician in the apostle. He will give that which "he has received of the Lord." God has testified to the power in Christ to give words of life to men; He has testified to the power of His Cross; He has testified to His work continued from the unseen on the hearts of the

responsive. St. Paul feels his task to be—whether in preaching, or teaching converts to celebrate the Communion—the transmission of the Divine witness.

This is why in his utterances he is careful to lay stress on the application of a Divine remedy rather than on the framing of a system of thought. It would have been a possible thing for him to play consistently the part of a scholar and student and to commend Jesus to the wise—indeed it may be said that he did it without meaning to do it. But although he was led through controversial demands to frame a system and to teach ethics, these things were not the supreme attraction of his mission for St. Paul. No doubt Christ's cause will always demand the service of the thinker, the man who can demonstrate the reasonableness of Christianity. Such men, from Origen to Dean Inge, serve the more thoughtful minds; but it is the Gospel note, the note of pardon, of deliverance wrought through the Cross, that wins the common heart:

"Who speaketh now of peace?
Who seeketh for release?
The Cross is strength, the solemn Cross is gain.

The Cross is Jesus' breast,
Here giveth He the rest
That to His best belov'd doth still remain."

"Jesus Christ, and a crucified Jesus Christ," this is what the Communion announces: a humbling theme to the men of the world of the first preachers. Remember Cicero's words about the punishment of the Cross: "Let that Cross be not only far from the body of Roman citizens, but even from their thoughts, their eyes, their ears." Lucian called Jesus "that gibbeted Sophist." His name in hostile Jewish literature is "The Hanged." The Gospel story that exalted Him shattered the dreams of the Jews; it offered to the Greeks, worshippers of wisdom, and to Romans, worshippers of power, as Saviour and Lord one who had been executed in a fashion reserved for the worst criminals: it was offensive to the Jew, foolish to the Greek, contemptible to the Roman.

The Holy Communion is a perpetual witness of this great fact—the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ for mankind. It speaks its own message of our peril and need and of His abandonment of love. It does not utter a theory. Ideas are

no substitute for personal power. We have only to think of the many books written about Jesus which turn His living truth into dry, intellectual formulæ. They are written by men who seem determined to know everything among men save Jesus Christ and a crucified Jesus Christ. It is not by systematized knowledge so wrought up that men are saved. Science is God's gift, whether it be biology or theology. It can do much in right hands; but it cannot give spiritual healing. The question, "What think ye of Professor Thomson?" or the question, "What think ye of Canon Barnes?" is of great interest; but the answer to either will settle no man's destiny. The language of the Communion is plain: it asks, "What think ye of Christ?" It says for Him, "Remember Me." "Remember My love!" The answer does not require acuteness. It requires gratitude. It requires the spiritual sense.

"The angels keep their ancient places:
Turn but a stone and start a wing;
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

But when so sad thou canst not sadder,
Cry; and upon thy sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night my soul, my daughter,
Cry—clinging Heaven by the hems,
And lo! Christ walking on the water,
Not of Gennesareth but Thames."

The simplicity of the symbol is like the terseness and clarity of the early discourses in the Acts. In them were no polished periods to attract attention to their own beauty, apart from their burden. The man who wrote the Hymn of Charity could have wooed lovers of charmed speech by his words had he chosen, but his aim was to magnify Christ. In the first nine verses of the Epistle which records for us the institution of the Lord's Supper, he names Jesus Christ nine times. As Michael Angelo wore a lamp on his cap to prevent his shadow falling upon the picture he was painting, so St. Paul wore self-suppression: he preached not himself but Christ Jesus as Lord. So does the Supper itself preach one thing—remembrance of Jesus.

St. Luke tells of two disciples of whom the Lord was known in the breaking of bread. This has

been the experience of multitudes of believing hearts. To have knowledge of Christ in the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine in the Supper is for us to receive its supreme blessing. It is to know the Supreme Man in His supreme act. It is to know, as has been said, " as much of God as could be held in a human mind and heart, and shown in human virtues." " The Cross," says Dora Greenwell ". . . became to me the revelation of a loving and suffering God. I learnt to look upon the sacrifice of the death of Christ not only as being the all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, but also an everlasting witness to God's sympathy with man." Christ's purity was a manifestation of the holiness of God; His patience was the long-suffering of God; His compassion was the mercy of God; His tenderness was the gentleness of God; His sympathy was the unveiling of the heart of God; His Cross was the demonstration of the holy, sin-bearing love of God. To grow into its meaning is the education of the soul. It is the awakening of the whole nature through the quickening of the capacities that deal with eternal things. Over against our human prob-

lem is the enigma of the Cross ; over against the mystery of iniquity, the mystery of godliness; over against the power of sin is the power of love.

Do we not get close to life's secret at the Cross ? It remains true that " Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." Every joy is exposed to blight: increasing knowledge, increasing refinement, increasing goodness and sympathy all mean increasing sorrow. Life's conflict is no phantom fight. No argument destroys its reality. People suffer for being better: the Holiest most. Therefore the Cross is the symbol of life. To it the deep things of experience send us. " There is no gain except by loss; there is no life except by death." " I have been crucified with Christ " expresses the law for noble hearts. Parents, patriots, toilers prove its truth. Blood of body, toil of brain, agony of heart—these things are the price of redemption from evil ; of the passage from lower to higher; from terror to light and freedom. Those whose memorials are wreathed with flowers to-day were crowned with thorns once. All work that helps the world in its bitterest need costs heart's blood. " No suffering

for sin," I read, " can be so deep as that which is endured for the bad by the good who love them, and do not partake of their guilt." The good heart, in proportion to its goodness, suffers. The real Cross of Christ was the sin of the world.

" Do this in remembrance of Me." The might of the Cross endures beyond all changing fashions of speech about its meaning. Believing men grow into fuller knowledge of that meaning, and deeper submission to its power. The fashion of speech of this age, as all its other fashions, passeth away. Think of the old fashions of speech about science and religion, the old " reconciliations," even the moods of thought in a poem such as " In Memoriam," how they pass away ! Think of art: it has its passing modes. We have deplorable statues that exhibit what was once the momentary fashion of a base realism, reproducing even the absurdities of modern dress; pictures in which unrelated fragments of geometry are impressed to do the work of artistic imagination. And we have in the great galleries, let us be thankful, masterpieces that will outlive all changes, and abide as long as the mere material of the works can resist decay.

The great painters and the great poets cannot be dethroned because they speak the timeless language. Men will care to look at the Apollo as long as they care for art at all:

" Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life and poesy and light—
The sun in human limbs array'd and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight."

Or, with a consciousness of the dead cruelties of dead empires, gaze at the Dying Gaul:

" And through his side the last drops ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower ; and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone."

It is the eternal tongue of art. And the Cross speaks the eternal tongue of the soul. "Whether there be tongues they shall vanish away." But this will not; because it is the language of Eternal Love.

It speaks to us the message of the Divine dealing with our sin. For long it was the method of preachers, in dealing with this great theme, to seek for analogies in the sacrificial systems of the past. They were not heedful of the teaching of the spiritual genius who wrote " The Epistle

to the Hebrews," or of that of Christ Himself. The sacrificial system was futile so far as any effectual cleansing of men's spirits was concerned. Far truer illustrations of New Testament teaching might be found in the experiences of the prophets and saints of Old Testament days. From Moses downwards the best men of the Old Economy, in the passion of their love and solicitude for the sinning nation to which they belonged, felt themselves identified with its destinies. They went beyond intercession in their prayers; they confessed sins against which they had personally protested; sins of which their own lives were clear. Somehow they felt themselves part of the erring people. The nation was a moral unit as a nation, and by love and sympathy they were implicated in its shame. On the crests of experience, in the agony of apprehensive love, Moses could pray for his people, and say to God that unless they were saved he did not care to be saved either. David, insulted and injured in the most cruel way by the rebellion of his son, was heart-broken over that son's death. But no words but those of love and longing well from him, "O my son Absalom, my son, my

son Absalom ! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son ! " God is the Father of men: that men have done so much to nullify their sonship has not destroyed His fatherhood. It has served to reveal Him as holy, sacrificial love. He is shown as Immanuel, God with us.

We have too often made an untrue separation between the action of Christ and the action of God. Christ's own teaching is that there may be such an interpenetration of the human spirit by the Spirit of God that the action that follows is Divine. His harassed and persecuted disciples are bidden to be unconcerned as to the words of their defence before men: " For," He said, " it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." In Himself the indwelling is perfect: " The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." His attitude to sin was God's attitude to sin. Every step of the hard road to Calvary that Jesus travelled, He travelled in accord and communion with God. God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ. David yearned over Absalom with a passion of longing that was helpless;

God yearned over us with a love that was mighty to save.

Ages ago Moses prayed to God: "Show me Thy glory." The answer he got was: "All My goodness shall pass before thee." The perfect identity of God's glory with His goodness is seen in Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ crucified. It is the glory of One who suffers to redeem. It is shown us anew with each Communion service:

> When on Calvary I rest,
> God, in flesh made manifest,
> Shines in my Redeemer's face
> Full of beauty, truth, and grace.

THE SUCCOUR OF THE SACRAMENT

By R. C. Gillie, M.A., D.C.L.

"*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Seeing that we, who are many, are one loaf, one body: for we all partake of the one loaf.*"

1 Cor. x. 16, R.V. (*margin*).

The Succour of the Sacrament

In these days we need all the succour we can get, if we are to keep the right spirit. We have come to the long stretch of the road, with no turning in sight, all uphill. Naturally we test again the various aids which have helped us in the past, especially our Bible, and the use of prayer and Christian fellowship. For we know that from the unseen comes the most certain succour. It grows both more difficult and more necessary to use these helps for our spirit which are the channels of the Holy Spirit. But they all stand the test. Still we need more. Have we sought it as we might in the Sacrament of Holy Communion?

This Sacrament has another use besides succour. It is the clearest way of witnessing to our Lord. It is the hall-mark of loyalty to Him, to the graciousness and importance of His death, to the reality of Christian brotherhood. That is

what drew some of us to it at the first. We were very ignorant and very vague, but we were quite sure of one thing—we had to confess our Lord before men. This was the unmistakable way. I want never to diminish that side of sacramental observance. But it is possible to emphasize it too much, to press it exclusively. For some people Holy Communion is chiefly an obligation and often a burden. There is another side, by far more important. To use the old term, it is a *means of grace*, a channel of succour, God's opportunity as well as ours. He desires it so as to benefit us, more than we ever desire it to glorify Him. It is a place to receive, a place of restoration and renewal and refreshment. Think of the words "*the cup of blessing*." That surely means more than the cup of our thanksgiving. It is the cup of God's benevolence.

When we think of the succour of the Sacrament we may view it in two ways at best: (1) its adaptability to the Divine truth it expresses; (2) its adaptation to the human nature to which it brings blessing.

The Succour of the Sacrament

I

Think first of its suitability to express the sovereign truths about our Lord. It is His way of telling again all down the centuries the story of His splendid death. When the minister breaks the bread, just as He did—and this is a set part of our Presbyterian observance—the action tells again of His broken body. When the wine is poured, we are told again of the outflow of His blood. It is as if He with His own lips told us the essentials of the story, and with an intimate personal appeal. "Broken for you" or "Given for you," "Shed for you," are the words I have the right to speak, for they are the words of Scripture. To every loyal heart they declare the immediate and present influences of the great death died so long ago. It is true that our Lord said but little about His death before He died in the way of explanation or of application, but by the establishment of this sacrament He took care that the fact, ever more important than the theory, should never be forgotten. The centuries gone are blotted out and the deed upon the Cross is again seen by wondering

eyes, wheresoever the Christ's disciples gather to His observance. And it may be that often we understand it as the first beholders did not, their eyes clouded with sorrow, their hearts heavy with apprehension. Here our Lord presents anew to us the transcendent fact of His death. It is His sermon on His death.

II

More than this, its suitability to the Divine truth it expresses is shown, because it tells so clearly His present availableness. What did that death mean? Not simply that all that needed to be done was done that we might be welcomed to forgiveness, but that it released Him to be available in His own personality to every true seeker. His whole personality, perfected in obedience, complete in sacrifice, is available for each of us. We are not mere beholders, we are partakers. "Eat," "Drink thereof," are the words in our ears. The broken bread, of which we partake, means His body and the Personality of which His body was the outward appearance; the poured-out wine, of which we partake,

means His blood, and His blood, the vehicle of life, was the symbol of His life. Therefore when the bread and the wine enter into our bodies this is the plain and unmistakable assurance, that He, His personality, His life are available for us. So far as He can, so far as we make it possible for Him—for there is nothing magical here, but the living interaction of two personalities—so far as He can, He bestows Himself upon us for the daily struggle, the awaited sorrow, the renewed temptation. Union with Him becomes a simple, shining fact here. It is His pledge that He gives Himself to mingle in our life.

I know that many Free Churchmen content themselves with a far shallower view of the experience possible to us here. I know too, that other Christians overdrive the experience until it seems to border on sacred magic or to overpass the line. But for myself I cannot see how our Lord, when He says "Eat," "Drink," could have meant less than this; nor do I see how He could have guarded against the exaggerations and perversions without diminishing the fulness. If He did not mean as much as this, why did

He say "Eat," "Drink"? If He did mean as much, could He have chosen a simpler, a more explicit method of declaring the high purpose of His heart, to be available to all men, and for all man's needs?

III

But secondly, consider how perfectly adapted this sacrament is to the need of our human nature, to its mould and shape. Two things we suffer from in all our inward life, monotony and vagueness. Day after day we have to struggle on with much the same kind of incident in our intercourse with the Unseen. Day after day too, the spiritual facts are for a good many of us, like a fog-bank, real and hiding something still more real but dim. This sacrament deals effectually with these two disabilities. It removes monotony by giving focal points of spiritual experiences, mountain peaks on the journey, a little troublesome to climb but vastly rewarding.

Most of us have not lived long before we discover what things stir our hearts most. For some to revisit the old birth-place, for others an

ancient grave. There we can feel again, solemnity comes upon us and vitality. We shake off the dust which has gathered on mind and soul. For some of us again, to hear the plash or the roar of the waves, to smell the odorous sea, that always gives the sense of space and vision. For others, it is the hills ; the dim blue outline makes our hearts leap up, and then to follow the upward path, away into the silences, the only companions a few sheep cropping the turf, that means release and freedom. These are *focal moments of experience.* If we are wise we seek them on our holidays. It is the spirit more than the body, at least as much as the body, which needs refreshment. And in such moments we get it.

Our Lord knew this. He knew the danger of dullness in the religious life, the constant plodding, a little forward, a little backward, less backward than forward, still a little less forward than we had hoped, the same to-morrow and the day after. So He gives us the special moments. This sacrament is Christ's trysting place with us, His appointed tryst, for more prolonged talk, for quiet waiting together.

Some people ask, "Can you not have elsewhere what you receive here"? And others assert indignantly: "No, this is sacramental grace. Only here is this experience. It is different in kind as well as in degree." I think our Lord would wonder to hear such questions and such answers. He is never localized. There is no limitation in the time or manner of His giving. He is greater than all His means of grace. Of course, He can give Himself fully, markedly in other hours and in other ways. But this is His trysting place with us, His special hour. Who would willingly miss it?

I may get great thoughts and renewal of life when on the thronged pavement, and I sometimes miss them when among the hills, yet all the same the hills are the likeliest place for my mind to bathe in the great ocean of thought. I sometimes get more from my friend in a chance five minutes than when we sit side by side for an hour. But am I going to miss the special hours with him for that reason?

Our Lord gives us wonderful impressions of Himself and great inflow of helpfulness without a sacrament, but all the same this is His trysting

place, His opportunity and ours. Oh, foolish to miss a tryst of His appointing !

IV

The further proof of adaptation to human need is this. Most of us are greatly helped by outward acts to make inward facts more real. We need the lifebelt if we are to swim easily in the rough water. Symbols are the lifebelt. The marriage ring does not make marriage more of a fact. You can be married without one, and though you have one, it may be you have not been married. But the marriage ring helps every wife to know the reality of the married life and the holiness of her vow. Just in the same fashion, the University hood is the symbol of the University degree, the pinnacle of a church the symbol of its purpose, and the medal on the soldier's coat the symbol of his heroism and the honour he has received.

Our Lord knew this full well. So He used many sacraments ; the sacrament of failure—" Shake off the dust of the rejecting city " ; the sacrament of the gift of the Spirit, " He

breathed on them" ; the sacrament of His final disappearance—" He ascended till a cloud received Him up" ; and also these two sacraments, one of washing, and one of eating and drinking together. These last are the permanent ones and their meaning deep and wide.

He knew, of course, the danger of materializing religion. The proof of that was continually before Him in the temple. So He chose as His symbols two of the simplest acts of life : the washing of a new-born babe or of a man from dust and filth, and the eating and drinking which sustain life. In each case the essential significance is not in the accessories of the act but in the act itself, open to the understanding of the humblest intelligence. He couldn't have taken greater precautions to prevent elaboration and materialization. Well, mankind, ecclesiastical mankind, has managed to overlay their simplicity with all manner of elaborate observance. But we need not desert the simplicity on that account. It is given us for our helping. *The Sacrament of Communion is the marriage ring of the union of the soul with God in Christ.*

Here is actuality. That is why men shrink

from it. That is why every humble, true believer should press to it and into the fullness of it. Eat thereof, "Receive Christ," He is giving Himself to the open hand of faith.

V

Thus for our succour, this sacrament is perfectly suited to teach the Divine truth and to meet the mould of our human nature. Thus heartened we can take our final glance at our responsibility. We have a responsibility. The saying of the old mystic stands true, never truer than to-day, "All that happened to Christ must happen to His disciples." For us there is a crucifixion, a death, a renewal. Once, many times, always, there must be a dying to self, a dying in so many ways. For us, too, there is to be always a rising with Him to win victories, many resurrections from deep distresses and heavy castings down. Our valleys of Achor are to be doors of hope.

When you stood by the turnings
Named Ease and Strife,
Say—which did you take
On the road of Life?

When you heard old companions
  Shout Crucify!
And dance for your death—
  Did you dare to die?

When you reached the dark portal
  That Christ called Pain,
Did you gladly pass out
  With the Splendid Slain?—
Were you buried—deep down?
  Did you rise again?

These are the questions of the sacrament. We can only answer them fully when we know its succours.

Can we come then to this place of wonderful succour and heartening? Can it become a fountain to us, not a place of sentimentalism, where our spirit finds reinforcement? Listen to this: "An average man came to the conclusion that it was up to him to become a Churchman. Jesus Christ was his ideal after all. If he could embody even a little bit of Jesus, that was good enough. So he came to Communion and found in the breaking of bread and in the drinking of the wine the symbols of the very essence of his faith. He knelt and said, "Lord Jesus, I want to be a bit of Thee. I want to show a little bit of Thee

to the world. I want to offer Thee my body to be a member of Thy Body, that it may show to the world a little of Thy Spirit. O Lord Jesus, it is a wretched thing that I offer Thee. Yet Thou canst use it if Thou wilt and purify it for Thy purpose."

And the Lord Jesus gave to him bread and wine and said: "Dear brother, thy gift I accept. So long as thou offerest it, I will receive it and will live again in the world in thee and in thy brethren. Take this bread, it is My token that thou art a member of My body. Take this wine. It is the token that while thou offerest thyself to Me, My Spirit shall live in thee and show itself to the world."

THE MARKS OF JESUS

By Principal H. Maldwyn Hughes, D.D.

"*I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus.*"
Gal. vi. 17.

The Marks of Jesus

MANY of the Fathers, who sat at the Council of Nicea, were scarred or maimed or mutilated. They bore the marks of their devotion to Christ in the times of persecution through which they had passed. They spoke with the authority of men who had proved their loyalty to Christ, by surviving the most painful tests. So St. Paul, when his apostolic authority is questioned, replies to his opponents, "I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus." The words are to be understood in the light of practices which then prevailed. Sometimes domestic slaves or prisoners of war were branded with the name of their owner. Slaves attached to a temple were branded with the name of the deity there worshipped. Soldiers, too, sometimes branded the name of their commander on some part of their body. St. Paul has all these practices in mind. He is the slave, captive, minister, the soldier of Jesus Christ. He bears branded on him the marks

of his Owner, his Lord, and his Commander. The reference is, of course, to the weals and scars of persecution. He says elsewhere, "Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned." The marks of his steadfast devotion to Christ were branded indelibly upon him.

That was a great deal. But there is more than that to be said. The marks of Jesus were branded on his soul. He could never have endured the terrible physical tortures which he experienced, had he not been inwardly conformed to Jesus Christ. The scars were but the outward sign and symbol of the marks of Jesus on his soul. And that is what matters. We, in our day, are not called upon to endure scourging and maiming to prove our loyalty to Christ, but we are called to bear branded on us the marks of Jesus. There is nothing else which will convince the world of the reality of our Christian discipleship. We may plead our connection with the Church, our orthodoxy of belief, or our good works, but the world raps out the disconcerting question—Where are the marks?

1. *What are the marks of Jesus?*

It is not an easy question to answer. What are the marks of a great general? It is easy to enumerate certain qualities—coolness, courage, prudence, dash, imagination and magnetism. But you have not answered the question. Everything depends on how these qualities combine. For instance, he may be prudent when he ought to take risks, or he may take risks when he ought to be prudent. There is some subtle, intangible, indefinable quality which lies behind and permeates all these other qualities, and which makes the great general.

So with the marks of Jesus. It is easy to enumerate the qualities of His character—love, humility, purity, strength, tenderness, sacrifice. These are His marks, the marks which we must reproduce in our lives. It is well that we should be definite, and keep these qualities clearly before us. Christian discipleship is not adequately expressed in vague, uplifting emotions; it must prove itself by the production of definite moral qualities. When you have named all these qualities, you have not produced a picture of

Jesus Christ. You are faced with the question—How do these qualities combine? How do they harmonize with and balance one another? How do they unite to produce the perfect character?

A friend of yours sits for his portrait. You go to see the portrait, and you compare the features with those of the original. You cannot deny that the reproduction is correct, but you see that there is something lacking. You cannot place your finger on the defect, but you know that this portrait is not the likeness of your friend. You persuade him to sit for another artist, and this time, when you see the picture, you say, "This is the likeness of my friend." The second artist has not portrayed the features any more accurately than the former, but with the insight and skill of genius, he has succeeded in conveying the suggestion of the soul which is behind them. The picture suggests to you, not a mechanical combination of qualities, but the permeating, pervading spirit which unifies and harmonizes them and which shines through them. And this illustrates what is meant by the expression "the marks of Jesus." It conveys to

our minds certain qualities of character and life, but it also suggests that subtle intangible thing that we call spirit, and which permeating and pervading all our life touches it with beauty.

You come in contact with a man who is a saint in the truest sense of the word. You say—I was greatly impressed with the beauty of his character. But if I ask you what it was that impressed you, you do not find it easy to tell me exactly what you mean. You are not satisfied with giving a list of virtues. You have been conscious of an atmosphere, a fragrance, an aroma. You cannot define it, but that is what we mean when we speak of the marks of Jesus. The beautiful markings on the flowers have not been painted by hand, but are the product of modifications of inward processes of life. The marks of Jesus are not moral achievements, but spiritual gifts—the fruit of inward spiritual processes, dependent on the permeation of the whole personality by the spirit of Jesus.

2. *These marks are Marks of Ownership.*

These are days in which everyone rejoices in his independence. But none the less the fact

remains that we all have an owner and are branded with his name. We belong to Christ, or we belong to our business, or to some scheme or ambition that we cherish, or to some habit that has mastered us. A man may say to you, "I began as an office-boy in my present firm, and now the business belongs to me." And the tragedy of it is that though he does not know it, he belongs to the business, and the marks of his owner are printed indelibly on his face. If you want to know who or what is a man's master, listen to his conversation, and unconsciously he will give you the clue. Whatever the subject he is discussing, you will soon discover his attitude to life, and you will know the name of his owner. Every one of us belongs to some one or some thing, and we bear the marks of our owner far more clearly than we are wont to think.

We are the professed disciples of Christ. St. Paul tells us that we are not our own; we have been bought with a price. Christ, by His love and sacrifice, has established claims upon us, which we gladly and freely recognize. Although His service is perfect freedom, we are literally His bondslaves. We are bound to Him by chains

of love, and they are infinitely stronger than fetters of steel. And as we are His bondslaves, we bear branded on us the marks of our Owner. That is why we do not need to announce or advertise that we are disciples of Christ. No man need wear a badge to let the world know that he is a Christian. If we bear the marks the world will take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus.

Nothing else will convince men that we are Christ's disciples, but the marks will persuade the most obstinate and prejudiced scoffer. It is often said that there is little difference between the Church and the world. But there ought to be a great and easily recognized difference—the marks of Jesus. We are lamenting the weakness and lack of influence of the Christian Church. But if we all bore the marks in the common walks of life we should not need to complain of lack of influence or power. The all-pervading Spirit of Jesus, bringing forth in us Christlike thoughts and characters and deeds—that ought to mark us off from those who are not called by the Name.

"See how these Christians love," said the

ancient world. It bore its reluctant testimony to the marks. It said, "These men do not merely profess. They bear visibly branded on them the marks of their Owner. You can recognize them not merely in their churches, but in the common walks of life." That is the witness which the Church must bear to the world. When men say of all her members, "Wherever and whenever you meet them, they bear branded on them the marks of Jesus," then we shall see the Kingdom of God advancing in power and glory. God add to the number of those who bear branded on them the marks of Jesus!

3. *How are the marks produced?*

They are branded on us. We do not acquire the marks of Jesus easily or without pain and cost. They have to be burnt into our souls.

Life is a discipline; we are here to acquire the marks of Jesus. We should treat life differently if we took the trouble to ask its meaning and to define it. Life is not a mere interlude in the age-long history of the soul. We are not here merely to kill time as pleasantly as possible.

Life is not aimless or purposeless. We are not mere pieces of driftwood, tossed about in an eddy, until they are caught once more in the main current of the stream and carried into the infinite ocean. Life has a purpose and is to be defined in terms of purpose. We are here to grow—to grow into the likeness of Christ. There is much in our life here which is difficult to understand, but we know that it is one of the schools in which God teaches and trains and disciplines the soul. All the discipline of life is intended to be subservient to the great end of conforming us to the likeness of Christ. Temptation, suffering, sorrow, disappointment are painful experiences. They burn our souls, and either purify or scorch them. It is strange how differently different men use these varied experiences. On some they leave ugly scars and gaping wounds, but on others they brand the very marks of Jesus.

It is a commonplace that the colours must be burnt into the best pottery. They are neither so beautiful nor so enduring if simply laid on by hand without the burning. Give that jar to an unskilled potter, and he will make a sad

mess of the burning. Instead of the beautiful marks, there will come out ugly blotches. But give the jar to the skilled potter, who knows how to temper the heat to the vessel, and it will emerge from the fire a thing of perfect beauty.

You and I are unskilful potters. We do not know how to use the fires of life's discipline for the perfecting and beautifying of our characters, and we produce dull blotches instead of marks of radiant beauty. The skilled potter is Jesus Christ. He understands all about the vessel. He tempers the heat so that we shall not be tempted or tried above that which we are able to bear. Let us surrender ourselves to His keeping and obedience, and the fires will not scorch us, but will cause to stand forth in colours of radiant beauty the marks of Jesus.

You will remember the story that has come down to us of how there was once given to Francis of Assisi such a vision of the Crucified that he felt sharp pains mingling with his ecstasy. Stirred to the depths of his being, he was anxiously seeking the meaning of it all, when he perceived in his body, in his hands and feet and side, the marks of the Crucified. There are many who

accept the story as authentic. But to me, the story is even more wonderful if it is not literally true. Francis's fellowship with Christ must have been very real and his conformity to the likeness of Christ very close, before the legend could have sprung up that he bore on his body the very marks of Jesus.

That is the secret of the marks—life in fellowship with and in obedience to Jesus Christ.

4. *The marks can be reproduced in every one of us.*

This is not an impossible ideal to set before ourselves. We are sometimes apt to forget that St. Paul and the Apostles were men of like passions with ourselves, and we imagine that the heights which they attained are unattainable by us. But it is one of the essential truths of the Gospel that the mountain-peaks of character and experience are accessible to all sorts and conditions of men. Christ offers each one of us, not moral respectability, but conformity to His glorious likeness.

We come to this feast of the Holy Communion in order that we may enter into closer and deeper

fellowship with our Lord, and may be conformed to His glorious likeness. Let us open our hearts wide to Him that our fellowship with Him may be so constant that He may brand His marks on us. Then shall men take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

THE PRESENCE

By Norman Maclean, D.D.,
Edinburgh.

"*Surely the Lord is in this place.*"

Genesis xxviii. 16.

The Presence

The greatest thing in the world is a Christian congregation engaged in the supreme act of worship, raised by the fellowship of a noble emotion into the unity of one thought and one love, as we show forth our Lord's death, offering up "a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same." Ebenezer Erskine wrote of a night of high experience: "On that night I got my head out of time into eternity"; and here we, too, as we watch the shadows gather over Calvary, and see the gloom irradiated by the Lord of Life, triumphant over death, and feel the mystical fellowship of the unnumbered hosts who in all ages have broken the Bread and drank of the Cup, and see the goal of all our striving shining before us—we, too, get our heads out of time into eternity. For the centuries meet and blend in this act, and the awed heart cannot but say: "Surely the Lord is in this place."

I

The whole secret of a living religion is the realization of the presence of God with us. And we may well make it our purpose to realize at this Holy Communion service that Divine Presence as never before.

It is by no means an arduous task to realize the presence of God in the universe which He has made. Whenever we contemplate the world we find that it is intelligible. Law reigns everywhere and every event has an adequate cause. Were there no mind at work in the world similar to our own we could never understand the way of its working or the regularity of its laws. Just as we can never find any reason in the ravings of a madman, so would we find no reason or intelligibility in the universe if there were no intelligence at work in it. The mind of man cannot but thrill at the conscious presence in the world of the mind of God. There comes at times a vivid, overwhelming impression of this Presence of God in nature: "Then felt I as some watcher of the skies when a new planet sweeps into his ken." In the mystery of the

dawn standing "tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops"; in the apocalyptic glories of a sunset; in the play of light and shadows over the wine-red moors; in the vista of the sea clamorous with all its waves, the soul of man, as though suddenly wakened from sleep, can feel the Presence and can say: "Surely the Lord is in this place. . . ." But, thrilling though that realization be, yet it leaves the heart aching and lonely still. A feeling of haunting sadness envelops the sensitive soul. For Nature is utterly indifferent whether our hearts be joyous or overwhelmed with sorrow. The same sky arches over the bridegroom as over the man whose eyes are blinded by tears. There is a presence in the gloaming—but it is a presence without compassion and without sympathy. Nature brings no rest to the restless heart.

II

It is after another Presence that the heart of man longs—the Presence of a God that loves and cares and sympathizes. We would never have known that God loves with a love that empties itself and dies, were it not for the revelation

through Jesus Christ our Lord. And when at the Holy Communion table we hear the words, "This is My Body broken for you: this is My Blood shed for you," we feel enfolding us the love that would not let us go, and laid down life itself for our sake. No wonder men felt their souls go forth in adoring self-surrender as they ate of that Bread and drank of that Cup; no wonder the Church propounded great dogmas to give intellectual expression to the spiritual truth that the soul found there the very Presence of God.

And these doctrines are not only reasonable but inevitable. That there should be a real Presence in the Sacrament is of all things the most credible. It is in line with all that we know of the ways of God.

(1) It is surely reasonable that God should make His Presence felt to the seeking soul. If there be any truth acceptable to the modern mind it is surely the fact of the immanence of God. All sages and prophets and teachers agree that God is omnipresent. Present in the abysses of space, folding the stars in His mantle; woven into the texture of the light; everywhere in the

smallest as in the greatest, in the perfection of an atom as in the mightiest sun—everywhere God !

If it be easy to believe that (and without that the universe would be a chaos) surely it is a strange delusion to think that there is no presence of God in the life of the soul which is the very image of God. The God who can be present in the whispering leaves of the forest is surely present when the soul kindles at the call of sacrifice and dedicates itself to the service of the Highest and proclaims itself a citizen of Eternity. The heart of man knows that in the supreme hour of Holy Communion it is in the immediate presence of God. It touches the hidden core of fire.

(2) It is not regarding the presence of God in the Sacrament that Christians differ, but rather as to the nature of that Presence. What is it we feel? Not, surely, a material presence of the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, for " henceforth know we no man after the flesh." It is rather a spiritual Presence; the Lord comes to us in the power of His Spirit and through the bread and wine imparts Himself to us. If this

were an isolated fact that we were asked to believe it would be well-nigh incredible. But, so far from being isolated, it is in this manner that God always works. The Spirit of God manifests the glory of God by shining through a material body—even the body of Jesus. In the glorious personality of Jesus the Spirit operated through the flesh; and in every man the immortal Spirit dwells and manifests itself through the body of sense. It is only in line with all God's dealings that through material elements God's Spirit should come and possess the believing and seeking heart.

There never was a time when it was easier to cherish great thoughts regarding the Holy Sacrament than in this our day. For the whole universe is now demonstrated to be spiritual. It is the existence of matter that is now found difficult to believe. And every Christian knows how, when the great congregation is singing of the gates lifted up, that the King of Glory may come in, and the doors are flung open, and the solemn procession comes into the midst bearing the elements up to the Communion Table, there passes a wave of deep emotion over the

heart . . . God is here . . . Surely the Lord is in this place. By a faculty deeper far than reason we know it to be so. We are swept, as by a mighty tide, up to the feet of God.

III

We cannot truly cherish too great or too high a thought regarding the great ordinance that we are now to fulfil. We have to bestir ourselves lest familiarity should blind our eyes to its Heavenly import. Here we are to behold the Presence of God; and here, in our hearts, to realize the indwelling God. We can only do so by thinking not merely of Jesus whose Body was broken, but also by feeling through these elements the Infinite and Eternal God. We must reach forth to that which lies behind Calvary. Jesus hangs there because God so loved that He gave . . . It is in the will of God that the Cross was really erected. In the heart of God that Cross really abides still and will abide so long as cruelty and greed and lust go on crucifying God's children. We can feel the presence of God in the starry heavens, or in

the earth growing green, or in the voice of conscience; but here we are in the presence of that which is greatest in the Divine Nature—the sacrificial Love that giveth all. We touch the wounds of Christ; but we do far more. We touch the sacrificial heart of the Infinite God.

As we individualize ourselves in the presence of that immeasurable Love brooding over us, what wonderful things can happen. Jesus comes to us and says, This is My Body; receive Me. And as He breathed on His disciples saying Receive ye the Holy Ghost, He does likewise to us. And He infuses into us that same Spirit that changed the fickle and blaspheming Simon into Peter, the Rock; and quivering aspens into steel. And the presence of the Lord is transfigured into the presence of God as we see behold vista after vista of what the eye hath not seen nor the ear heard. . . . "I look at Him and He looks at me," answered the poor Spanish woman when she was asked why she gazed so intently at the altar. When we have exhausted all our words we come back to just that: He looks at me . . . Surely the Lord is in this place.

IV

Just because the Lord is in this place, there are others also. For He is the Lord of life, and death can have no dominion where He is. Of them who trust in Him He has said, "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish." Of them it is also written that they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. If He then be here, there is no reason to doubt that they also are here. The whole family on earth and in Heaven meet here round the Holy Table. They join their voices in the same triumphal strain: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain. John whose body lies in Flanders, and whose name is carved in the chapel yonder, his soul is here; and Andrew who laid down his life amid the Judean hills that the earthly Jerusalem might be freed—he is here. For no gun ever cast can kill souls. . . . The Lord is in this place, and with Him a host of the radiant ones worshipping, rejoicing and adoring. We can hear their voices saying one to the other: "We have not died in vain; for the soul of the world is throbbing with life: still the old sanctuary is thronged as in the days

of old; and the hearts of men go marching on to freedom and to the fulness of life." O beloved dead, who died that we might live, ye are still one with us in the communion of saints. With a new thrill of joy, as we think of you, we say, "The Lord is in this place." This is the feast of immortality; the seal of re-union. . . . We shall find you again.

V

As we wait kneeling at the Holy Table, thought after thought comes crowding in, and the vision of the land yet afar off gets clearer and clearer. But one last thought comes and that is this: that the great Sacrament of Christ's love is the assurance that the Presence of the Lord is not confined to sanctuaries built with hands. The Lord is in this place assuredly; but He is also to be found anywhere and everywhere. The commonest and cheapest of all things—bread and wine—are the materials of the Sacrament. By them we may realize that the elements of everyday life can become sacramental; and the common days become illumined

by the fire of God. It was a barren hill-side with shelving rocks at Bethel, but there the ladder was let down and angels descending and ascending made it holy ground. And there is no spot so bare and no life so barren but the Spirit of God can turn them into radiance. That is the great revolution Jesus wrought for the souls of men. Till then the Presence was in one place ; and God was to be worshipped in one place; but He said: Neither in this mountain nor in that Jerusalem, but wherever two or three meet, there is the place of worship—and there the Presence. The whole world is transmuted into a sacrament ; and every duty is changed into an act of worship. That was the lesson that Brother Lawrence learned when he said: " In the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were on my knees at the Blessed Sacrament." That is the wonderful thing about the Holy Sacrament. The souls that love it, and that there have basked in the radiance of the presence of the Lord, carry Him hence in their hearts, so that anywhere—even amid the noise and tumult of the street—

there can come a warm glow about the heart and a feeling beyond all words that God is there with them—they and He alone in the midst of the torrent of life. And the lips move silently and whisper voicelessly to the heart: Surely the Lord is in this place. . . . And now as we approach the Table of our Lord and show forth our Lord's death in the presence of men and angels as the one stay of our hope, the prayer of minister and of people may well be that of St. Ambrose: " Teach us, we beseech Thee, by Thy Holy Spirit: kindle in us the fire of Thy Holy Spirit. Amen."

COMMUNION AND SERVICE

Part I

Before Communion

WILL HE COME TO THE FEAST?

Part II

After Communion

SEPARATION AND SERVICE

By George H. Morrison, D.D.,
Glasgow.

"*What think ye, that He will not come to the feast?*"

John xi. 56.

"*For their sakes I sanctify Myself.*"

John xvii. 19.

Communion and Service

I

Before Communion

will he come to the feast?

We meet on the appointed day not only to have fellowship with each other, but also to have fellowship with Jesus Christ. We call this season our communion season, not as though all life may not be communion, but because now we long, with undivided hearts, after communion with our Lord and Saviour. Others may be absent from the table, and yet the table may be rich in blessing. Our dear ones may be far away from us, or God may have called them to a higher service. But if Christ be absent, our meeting is in vain. Our sacrament is but a wasted hour. Our common handling of the bread and wine can leave us no better than it found us. What think ye, then, will He come to the feast to-day?

That is the most vital of all questions. Will you allow me to tell you why I think that Christ will not disappoint us at this hour?

(1) I think that He will come because the feast is His. Now even if He were to be present as a guest, we might have a great hope that He would come. When Christ was invited as a welcome guest, He very rarely refused the invitation. There were invitations which, to scribes and Pharisees, would have had all the appearance of an insult, and yet when they were offered to our Saviour, He joyfully accepted them at once. Christ very rarely refused to be a guest. He does not refuse to be a guest to-day. "If any man will open to Me, I will come in and sup with him," He said. And yet at this season He is not our guest. He is our host. He is our entertainer. It is not to our table that we are inviting Him. It is to His table that He is inviting us. It is He who founded this supper and not we. It is His hospitality of love. It is He who has invited us to come—nay more, He has commanded us to come. What think ye, will He not come to the feast? Is it possible that He should disappoint us? There may be many

surprises in the Christian calling, but there never yet was a surprise like that.

(2) I think again that He will come, just because I know He loves to come. From all that we know of Christ this is a scene entirely congenial to His heart. Suppose for a moment it were John the Baptist. Suppose it were the Baptist we were talking of. What think ye, will John the Baptist come? How difficult it would be to answer that. For John was a solitary, and he dwelt apart, and he shunned the happy gatherings of men, and he loved the loneliness of desert places rather than the gladness of society. The feast was not congenial to him. Whenever he was invited, he refused. He was a stern and solitary figure, separate from the homes and haunts of men. But the Son of Man came eating and drinking. He loved congenial and sweet society. He was never happier than with His own, where hearts were loyal and sympathetic towards Him. If you delight in fellowship with Christ, He also delights in fellowship with you. Strange though it may sound to say it, He wants communion just as much as you do. Not all the praises of the choirs of angels,

nor all the adoration of the glorified, can fill His heart unless He has communion with those who are clinging to Him in the shadows here. That was His glory when He was here on earth. That is His glory in the skies to-day. He wants as passionately to dwell with you, as ever you have longed to dwell with Him. What think ye, will He not come to the feast? Is He likely to miss this priceless opportunity? Wherever the Lord is likely to be wanting, I am perfectly certain that it is not here.

(3) I think, in the third place, that He will come, because He has so often come before. I take it that that was in the people's minds when they discussed the matter in Jerusalem. Had they never heard of Him being at the Passover, the question would not have been worth discussing. Had they known that He shunned the city at such seasons, the most sanguine of them would not have expected Him. It was the fact that they all knew His custom, and had heard of His habit of going up for Passover, that set them wondering, in these peculiar circumstances, if He would act as He had been wont to do. Their hopes were based

on what they knew of Him. They were based on His usual conduct in the past. They said, "He has never failed to keep the feast, is it probable that He will fail now?" And, brethren, if that was so with them, and if it led them to anticipate His presence, how much more is it so with us? Is there anyone here to-day who does not know that Christ has often been here before? Are there not many here who can bear witness that here they have had fellowship with Him? He has come to the lonely and He has given them comfort. He has come to the weak and He has given them strength. He has come to the sorrowful, whose hearts were sore and heavy, and He has begotten them into a lively hope. I know no thought more strengthening and helpful than just the thought of past communion-seasons. Think of them, in their unbroken series, since the first day that this congregation met. How many are resting from their labours now! How many have passed into the upper sanctuary! How many are bearing witness at the throne that Christ was present at the communion-table! What think ye, will He not come to the feast? Is He a Christ who alters with

the years ? Is there no pledge of His communion in His fidelity to those who sleep ? The Lord has been mindful, and He will bless us still. The Lord is the same yesterday and to-day. The Lord is waiting to show His glory now, as we have seen it heretofore in the sanctuary.

(4) Then, lastly, I think that He will come just because we are a company of sinners. Christ may be very busy in the glory ; but He is never too busy to come where He is needed. "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them"—that was the taunt they flung at Him in Galilee. It was with sinners that He went to dine, and it was just because they were sinners that He went. And so to-day He comes to sup with us, not for our holiness, but for our need ; because the only cry that we can cry is this, God be merciful to me a sinner. The great question to ask yourself is this, do you really feel your need of Christ ? If not, my brother, then you are not prepared, though even now God's Spirit may prepare you. But if you do—if you are poor and needy—if you feel you are a weak and guilty soul—then by everything I ever heard of Jesus I think He will be present here. Tell him all

the desire of your heart. Tell Him all the failure of the past. Tell him you are ashamed, that you are penitent, that you want to start again for Heaven to-day. Tell Him that, and He will listen to you. Tell Him that, and He will welcome you. He is the friend of sinners. He is the bread of life. "Thou, O Christ, art all I want."

II

After Communion

SEPARATION AND SERVICE

The first impression made by the life of Jesus on any candid and impartial student of it, is that of a separated, consecrated life. There is nothing here of the sway of diverse motives with its uncertain and ineffectual issues ; there is the unity of the whole moral nature in perfect dedication to God's will. Other men rise from the dust of battle to the sunlit hills where the peace of God is resting. Christ, as if the altitude were native to Him, moves upon the summits all the time. Other men have to struggle up the slope with many a bitter confession of defeat.

But Christ moves serenely and at ease on a higher level than we can ever reach. That is the meaning of that deep Johannine word, the sanctification of Christ Jesus. It does *not* mean that through the mist of years Christ was emerging into a brighter holiness. It means that in everything He did and suffered to the last hour of sacrifice on Calvary He was separating Himself in perfect loyalty to the redeeming will of God.

But if that be the first impression which Christ gives there is another which follows it immediately. It is how continuously and how spontaneously the sanctification of Christ issues in service. No one could read the story of Christ's life without whispering "He sanctified Himself." Yet to say that, and nothing more than that, would be to leave half the beauty of it shrouded. The whole impression is that of separation outflowing in the lowliest yet richest ministry—for others' sakes He sanctified Himself. Just as the stream rising in the heights, and upwelling from some mossy spring there, from the very pressure of its unceasing waters, flows downwards to refresh the haunts of men, so the life of Jesus, from the distant uplands far above

any human sound or footfall, flowed downward by the hot places of men's toil and by the shadows where women loved and wept. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself." I am separated just that I may serve. That is the motto of the life of Jesus and that the true inscription on the Cross.

Think, for example, of some of the greater hours in which we may reverently trace this separation. There is not one of them evolves into a rapture. Every one of them evolves in ministry. You see Him bitterly tempted in the wilderness—led there by the Spirit to sanctify Himself. Yet it is hardly over when He is back in Galilee, healing the sick and comforting the weary. You see Him on the mountain-side in prayer, alone with His Father in the spacious midnight, yet morning has not broken when He is on the lake, cheering His own as they battled with the storm. "Come ye apart and rest awhile," He said—come and let us sanctify ourselves—yet in an hour or two, what multitudes are these, and Who is this that with a few loaves is feeding them? And then there comes the Mount of Transfiguration, and Moses and Elias, and the glory—to close in what: in dwelling there in

tabernacles?—in the healing of the epileptic boy. For their sakes I sanctify Myself. First separation to the will of God; then service. That is the order in the life of Him who was the only begotten Son of God.

Now, brethren, if that is so with Christ, so should it be with all who name His name. Yet it is strange how often in the Christian life that order and dependence are forgotten. There is a view of the religious life, for instance, which lays the total stress on separation. It reaches its fullest expression in the monastery. It is the idea which regulates the convent. It says to eager or to weary hearts, The times are evil—come ye apart and fast and weep and pray—and so with the closing of the convent door the voices of the broad world are hushed for ever. No one would deny the moral grandeur of that renunciation of the world. Call it morally noble if you will, but I challenge any man to call it Christian. For the only separation Jesus knows, and the only separation He commends, is the separation that instantly and always issues in loving and devoted service. You may erect the cross above the convent gates, but it is not

the cross which dictates that surrender. The cross knows nothing of hand and heart and head withdrawn from the active service of the world. The world needs every gift and every grace that is committed to Christian men and women, and to seclude them within the convent quietude is to be false to the Giver of them all.

But if that be one view of the religious life there is another that runs to the opposite extreme. And as the former is the danger of the Roman Catholic, so is the latter the danger of the Protestant. It is the tendency to make religion synonymous with Christian service ; to think that the great seal of Jesus' followers is that they should go about doing good as He did ; to ignore the disposition of the heart, and the maintenance of personal communion, and to say that all is well when hands are busy and the life is rich in brotherly assistance. This is the very opposite of cloistered piety. It is piety helpful, brotherly and militant. It does not spare itself in toilful effort for the poorest dweller in meanest street. Instead of the ringing of the convent bell, it hears the raucous uproar of the street ; instead of the quiet of the sheltered

garden, it haunts the inodorous and crowded tenement ; instead of the hushed and meditative cell, it goes out into the ways where life is teeming, and where the name of God, which little children hear, comes reeking from the lips of blasphemy. Brethren, this is a glorious service, but remember it takes one thing more to make it Christian. It takes the earnest passion of the worker that he himself should be pure and good and holy. It takes the saved and separated heart to give power and consecration to the hand. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself."

Let us therefore try as we rise from the Lord's Table to redress the unequal balance of our lives. Just in proportion as we are blessed ourselves can we hope to be a blessing unto others. We must have our quiet hour on the hill if we would help those toiling in the waves. The Christian path to the epileptic boy comes down from the mountain of transfiguration. We must keep near to God in personal communion *not* that we may be led to mystic rapture, but that when we go out to help our brother there may be something of the power and peace of God with us. The face of Moses shone although he

wist it not when he had communed with God upon the Mount. Is there not something of that glow in every man who dwells deep in communion with His Maker? Then are we strong for all the claims of service. Then can we trace the rainbow through the rain. Then do we sanctify ourselves even as Jesus did, not for our own sakes but for the sake of others.

WHERE CHRIST IS CLEARLY SEEN

By James Reid, M.A.,
Eastbourne.

"The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread and blessed it and gave to His disciples."

1 Cor. xi. 23, 24.

Where Christ is Clearly Seen

These are among the most familiar words in Scripture. We have heard them and read them scores of times. They are embedded in the ritual of the most sacred act of our Christian worship. But how many of us read them with the emphasis St. Paul meant to give them? "The Lord Jesus, *the same night in which He was betrayed*, took bread."

Why pick out this incident from among the many others that happened that night? Was it only to fix a date? That is what we often do. We fix our dates in the long vista of the past by the things that happened then, and touched us to the quick with sorrow or with joy—the day someone was born, or someone went away. There are incidents in every life that are landmarks on the face of time; nothing will ever efface them from the mind. The whole landscape of circumstances is lit up there as by a lightning flash, that makes the details vivid. Was it only

for this reason St. Paul used this incident of the betrayal of Jesus, fixing a date for the Lord's Supper by the thing which stood out most tragically in all that night of shame? It may have been so.

But if we look a little deeper we will see that St. Paul has something more in mind. He is not fixing a date; he is painting a picture. It is a picture of Christ in all His grace and glory. And in painting this picture he is doing what every artist does—putting in the right background; for no picture can be true without the right background to make the subject in the foreground stand out in its true colour and perspective. This is just as necessary in the spiritual portrait of Jesus as in any picture on canvas. If we are to study Him fairly and see Him clearly, we must have the right background. We must see Him, for instance, in relation to the times in which He lived and the circumstances in which He moved, and the men and women who crowded round Him in His own day. Many of His words lose half their meaning till we know the background of the Gospels. His message was for all time, but the form of it was often

shaped by the circumstances of His own time, and we cannot release the eternal truth till we know the temporary situation.

But there is another background against which we must see Him, the background of human life with all its needs and troubles. There is no place where Christ does not shine. Set Him in a marriage feast, and He is heightening the joy. Set Him in a simple home like that at Bethany, and He is fitting into the life of a little family, showing the way to peace and quietness of heart amid the irritations of domestic duty. Set Him in a scene of sorrow, and there are tears in His eyes for human grief that make it bearable. Set Him where the Gospels show Him often, in a situation of storm and crisis, as when the boat was nearly overwhelmed in the lake, and He is master of the situation. The Gospels, in point of fact, give us a portrait of Jesus set against an ever-changing background of human life, and in every new situation some new aspect of His personality shines out, and gives to us, as we see Him there, the key to the position for the mastery of life. And there is no situation in life for which He cannot give us the key. If

you want to know how to overcome in any place, see Christ there—as you can generally see Him—and you have the secret. For in Him was life and His life is the light of men.

But there is one occasion where He is at His best, where He gives the very fullest revelation of His nature; where all that is in Him comes to its flashpoint, so to speak, and His whole personality finds release. That is the situation where the world is at its worst, where sin and evil and hatred and cruelty are gathered round Him to bring Him down to death. We cannot see Jesus in all His glory till we see Him there. We do not see Jesus fully when we look at Him among the lilies, and under the sunshine, teaching, healing, smiling with a happy world, though that is one aspect of His nature. We do not see Him at His greatest and deepest till we see Him against the background of Calvary. As He said Himself, looking at the oncoming shadow that was to fall over His life in a great eclipse, "The hour is come when the Son of Man should be glorified." And St. Paul had caught this truth in his picture of Jesus—"The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed,

took bread, and brake it and gave to His disciples."

What is the aspect of Christ that stands out from this background, as we watch Him breaking bread, and giving it to His disciples? Look at the background first. "The same night in which He was betrayed." The death of Christ may be studied from many points of view. Many things helped to bring it about. Various currents gathered in the maelstrom which sucked Him down to the depths of failure and shame. One immediate cause of it was the betrayal by His friends. With many He was a hero, and it was necessary to take Him unawares in some lonely spot. For that purpose they found a willing tool in Judas, one of these friends who were now gathered about the table in the upper room. We need not enter on the strange psychology of the mind of Judas. The fact remains that he became the betrayer of Jesus—he who had shared Christ's secret, who had known His intimate friendship through long weeks and months. He had sworn undying loyalty. He had been trusted, and now he used this very intimacy to betray Christ to His death.

It is the fashion to excuse Judas, and Jesus would have found something to say on his behalf. But facts are facts, and the fact is that Judas was a traitor, and treachery is the foulest of crimes. The common-sense judgment of conscience is right here. It was a black deed; the betrayal of a sacred trust, the falseness to a friend. And Judas was not alone in his treachery. There was St. Peter also; Christ saw the lurking possibility of it peeping out of his soul, even as they sat at table. The rest were not free from it either; they did not even go so far with Him as St. Peter into the zone of danger. At the critical hour they all forsook Him and fled. That is the crude historical fact.

It is easy, of course, to judge them as George Eliot does:

> The saints were cowards who stood by to see
> Christ crucified. They should have thrown themselves
> Upon the Roman spears and died in vain
> The grandest death, to die in vain for love.

It is easy to say that. Would we have done it? We may well wonder. Do we never betray Him with the kiss of empty sentiment upon our

lips, while at the same time we misrepresent Him with our lives? They lived to make magnificent amends, and that is more than can be said for many a man. But do not let us minimize what it meant for Jesus. Here He sat at meat with them, knowing, as He knew the souls of men, that they were going to fail Him at the last moment. That is the background, and now against it, let us look at Him—"The Lord Jesus took bread, and brake it and gave to His disciples, and said, 'This is My body broken for you.'"

What is it that shines out here? Surely it is a divine quality of love; a love which we can do nothing else than call divine. If you want to see love at its best, to see it in its true glory, see it in the day of adversity. Will it stand the strain of conflict, of difference of opinion, of misunderstanding, of apparent neglect? Will our human love stand that strain? That tests it. But will it do more? Will it stand the strain of treachery, of falseness, of a broken trust? It is a hard test, but it is the real test of the quality of love. And the measure in which it will endure and shine in circumstances like

these, is the measure in which it is divine. That is where the love of Christ stands out. There is its crown, its glory. It is there we are to look for His Divinity, not in any abstract ideas about His being of the substance or essence of God. The Divinity of Christ is revealed in the divineness of His love, a love which in all situations is not only perfectly unstained by revenge or coldness, but rises clear above all the tempest of hatred, and the poison breath of treachery, into a victory in which He gave Himself completely, and so made the occasion of His betrayal the very means of love's revelation. That is where He shines. "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and brake it and gave to His disciples, saying, 'This is My body broken for you.'"

Now what are the beams into which Calvary, like some broken crystal revealing the colours that make the light, breaks up the love of Christ so that we see its hidden glory?

One of them was forgiveness of the unforgivable. Is there anything so unforgivable as treachery? And yet He forgave it: that is to say, He refused to let it stand between Him

and them. It did stand, of course, so far as they were concerned. When Judas sat there with the crime purposed in his heart he could not know or realize the love of Christ. That great friendship was lost on him. It is the final tragedy of sin, that it brings us to a place where God becomes merely a theory, and the stars of faith and hope go out in a drenching darkness. Sin puts out the eyes of the spirit. Sin darkens the heart against the presence of God. Judas could not see this love for the moment; that is the charitable explanation to put upon it. Afterwards he saw; when the love had gone all lengths there came the revelation that was more than he could bear. But though there were clouds between these men and Him, there were none on His side—nothing but goodwill—"This is My body broken for you," He said, and all the time it was something in them which was to help to break it! "Here is the darkest fruit of your sin," He said in effect, "and I make it into a gift for you, for your strengthening, for a pledge of forgiveness, that will come into your hands in the hour when your sin rises up against you like a flood of great waters, threatening to over-

whelm you in depths of black despair, and your worst trouble is that you cannot forgive yourself." Now that is the love of God—its Divine quality; it so forgives that it seeks the man who is sinning against it, with a will that does not wait for penitence, but goes out to create it.

The world is so slow to learn the lesson. We speak of forgiving people after they have repented—that is our human way; and it sounds so righteous and so magnanimous. But it does not really touch the shining levels of real forgiveness, because it does not have the power in it to create repentance, and without that the restoration we claim to be willing to make does not come. Perhaps you say, "But what of righteousness? Dare we pass over sin? Dare we refuse to recognize a moral failure? Is not this smiling way of forgiveness mere laxity and foolishness, smoothing the road to evil by pretending it does not matter?" The answer is very simple. True forgiveness, true love, will have in it not only nothing of the offended spirit, but also everything of the broken heart. If we felt evil as God feels it, then our goodwill towards the man

who has sinned would have that agony, that suffering, which Christ had, and that would give it the power to redeem. Forgiveness with us means so often only the putting away of the offended spirit ; it so seldom means the winning of the sinful through a goodwill which changes the heart by suffering in the sin. "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and brake it, and said, 'This is My body . . .'" That is the love which can redeem, because it makes people able and ready to be forgiven.

But another of those beams was trust in the untrustworthy. He was trusting these fallible men, trusting them though their hearts were unstable as shifting sands, trusting them to carry on His work, and to hold in their minds and hearts the message of the Kingdom. Most of us would have given them up. "Once bitten, twice shy" is one of the maxims of worldly-wise morality. They were Christ's sole trustees. What did it mean, this gift of the bread, in the Eastern language of symbolism ? It meant, "I give you my confidence; I trust you with my friendship; I put on your shoulders the greatest trust ever

laid upon men—the trust of the truth the dying world needs." That trust is another beam of this amazing love of God. He trusts men. The whole meaning of our freedom is there; God trusts us. That is the explanation of the silence of God, the strange neutrality to good and evil which every fresh morning and every new harvest seems to suggest in Him. It is not really indifference; it is that God trusts men, hoping, believing, that the wonder of it all will come home, and men will rise to the amazing faith of God in us, which is new every morning and fresh every evening.

Why is it the love of God is so elusive a thing; so fleeting in its hold upon us? Why does not God compel? That is a common question. How is it He does not dragoon men into goodness? Why do we have to think it out, so to speak, while He stands back and waits, and things go wrong? It is because this kind of trust is always an element in love. When love has to dictate, to compel, the bloom is lost, the power is gone. In its true form love is always an appeal to honour; it asks from us the spontaneous virtue, nothing less; it seeks the gift which comes of

the heart's own unfettered impulse. Nothing less is of any value. It will have nothing to do with a righteousness that comes of force or fear—nothing to do with a service which is only conscript labour, done grudgingly out of an unwilling heart. God will not command; He will not compel. He waits; He trusts and goes on waiting and trusting amid a faithless world, sure that one day His loving faith in us will touch the secret spring that opens up the whole wealth and wonder of sacrificial service. "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and brake it and gave to His disciples."

Yet another beam of this love is its constancy in face of man's fickleness. How fleeting is our love to Him; how easily checked; how often dried up, like a river lost in desert sands. But His love flows on. Whatever might happen, Calvary was the sign to them that He would not fail—that He would not cease to love. The world is full of change and decay. One thing they could depend upon—His faithful love. There is a great word in St. John's Gospel, which illuminates this attitude of Christ, "Having

loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." To what end? To the end of life here? No! to the end of everything—to the end of the longest road of sin and selfishness by which men flee from Him. Whatever lights go out, that star shines.

There is a fine story of the wife of Romney the painter, whom Tennyson celebrates in one of his later poems. He had married early, but it seemed to him that his wife interfered with his ambitions; so he cast her off, and went on with his work, plunging into the whirl of flatteries which gathered round him, and keeping her out of his life. It was a brutal thing to do. But, away in the background, she waited, for she loved him still, and at the last, when he was ill and feeble, she came back and nursed him with tender devotion. It is one of these things that open windows into the spiritual world, and give us confidence that behind and through everything there is a great fountain where we too may drink—the enduring love of God. That is what Christ proclaims Himself to be, and God in Him:

A friend in sorest need
Of kindest word and deed;
A friend whose love flows on and on,
And knows no end.

It is that love which is our assurance—the living secret of all recovery. Behind everything, God loves. Through all our fickleness and failure, God loves. Whatever else goes, that love endures. It is as deep, the early writers tell us, as the foundation of the world.

That is our great stand-by. We cannot be sure of ourselves, but we can be sure of God. Much of our uncertainty and many of our depressions in religion come through our seeking the assurance of our standing with God in our own feelings about Him. We look within instead of looking without. We sink the lead into the depths of our own souls and find nothing there that can minister to our confidence or self-respect, even bringing up from these hidden depths things that make us shudder and be ashamed. The deeper we go, the more our prayer becomes the prayer of the publican—"God be merciful to me, a sinner." That moment of despair where we are forced to look

beyond ourselves is just where God meets us. But our mistake lies in looking within ourselves for peace, instead of looking to Him. Feeling is the product of religious faith; it is not the ground of religious confidence. Our assurance for the future is not that we love God; it is that God loves us. That anchor holds. As we see it, it holds us, and the more we see it the more we are held. But the moment we depend on our own feeling for confidence, that moment we lose confidence and begin to sink.

That love is what the sacrament of the Lord's Supper makes clear to us. It reveals the mighty, changeless, forgiving, trusting love of God for us, with all our fickleness and sin, and offers that love to us as a radiant fact. "Realize My love," Christ says to us. "Be assured of My forgiveness. Accept the pledge of My confidence and trust. Whatever you have been or done, or wherever you have wandered, here is My love still the same." What can we do but take it? What can we rest in, with all our fickleness, but just that love that will not let us go; and in that faith and utter surrender to Him we find both peace and power.

Where Christ is Clearly Seen

I grasp Thy strength, make it mine own
  My heart with peace is blest.
I lose my hold and then comes down
  Darkness and cold unrest.
Let me no more my comfort draw
  From my frail hold on Thee ;
In that alone rejoice with awe,
  Thy mighty grasp of me.

THE PRIESTLINESS OF INNOCENCE

By Professor James Alexander Robertson, D.D.
Aberdeen.

"*The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.*"

Matt. ix. 6.

"*Such an High-priest became us; holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners.*"

Heb. vii. 26.

The Priestliness of Innocence

What lay immediately behind this remarkable incident in our Lord's career is not difficult to imagine. A poor wretch reduced to a state of helpless decrepitude by a life of dissipation, and plaguing the life of his friends by his plaintive confessions and remorseful tears. And a message brought to his bedside—probably one of his friends, breathless, excited, bursts with it into his room one day—that an extraordinary man had made his appearance in the town, astonished the synagogue, and wrought healing by his word. Solemn yet blissful had been the effect of his presence on the crowd. The sight of his face and the sound of his voice were like a healing balm. And a faint hope wakened in the sufferer's soul. Perhaps to meet this man would be an end of pain and helplessness for him.

His morbid harping on the past had wearied his friends into action at last. And the result is this pathetic scene—not without its touch of

comedy—where the four couch-bearers, finding the passages congested, the doorway blocked and the windows thronged, climb with eager determination to the roof of the house where the Rabbi was teaching, dig an opening through the dry clay, and lower the sufferer down to Jesus' feet.

There follows a dramatic moment. The dejected cripple lifts a shaking head to look on Jesus' face, and tell his tale once more ; sees his whole story already reflected in the stranger's piercing, haunting eyes ; stammers, holds his peace, and hanging his head, ashamed, bursts into tears. Then a voice, low and soft and thrilling, at the sound of which the madding presence of the crowd melts away from the sick man's vision. It seemed to come from far-off spaces among the hills of God. It seemed to come from beyond the years that the locust had eaten. He felt as if, young and strong again, he stood once more at the point in his early prime, where the sinful life that had wrought his ruin had begun :

" Dry thy tears, my son, thy sins be forgiven thee " (not " thy palsy be healed," but

"the sin that lies behind the helplessness be forgiven").

And a rustle of startled commotion swept over the crowded room. "Thy sins be forgiven." What sort of being is this who arrogates to himself a power so awful! Who can he be? . . .

A few years ago, an American authoress, attempting to write a Life of Christ, assured us that when Jesus said, "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins," He was speaking simply as a man—"a fraction of that close-woven human fabric of which He at all times warmly felt Himself a part." It was as if He had said, "This man—this son of the human race—has power to forgive."

Can it possibly be so? Is there any truth in such a point of view? Of course, one man, in human fashion, can forgive another who has done him private wrong. But it would be waste of time thus wilfully to deceive ourselves as to the question at issue here. This is not the case of a man forgiving a personal wrong. Nor yet is it the daring instance of a man constituting himself the representative of the human race,

and offering *society's* forgiveness to a broken profligate for the tangle of sorrow and suffering his sin had involved his fellows in. The Scribes and Pharisees knew better than that when they asked, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" They recognized that this Jesus was claiming to offer the man *God's* forgiveness for the rankling wound His life of sin had made in the Divine Heart. It was something tremendous and unheard of that was spoken here.

But suppose we start from the assumption that Jesus was speaking simply as a man. Can we still hold this word of His for true? Is it ever the case that man—any son of the human race—has the authority to transmit God's forgiveness to men? I answer promptly, "Yes, there is a sense in which it is true." Any man *who has been true to his humanity* may be used by God as a channel to convey a fragment at least of the Divine Forgiveness to men. But let us make no mistake as to what that means. "True to his humanity"—that is the point. It is the man who has himself remained pure who can be the medium of the Divine Forgiveness. *Only* he;—and just

in proportion to his pure-heartedness. Not the austere Puritan who has only put fetters on his passions: what does his hard heart know of forgiveness? But the tender heart whose passions have been transformed into a holy, selfless sympathy for men. This is that priesthood of innocence, ordained by a mystic unction, whose source is from Above. Alas! how few have preserved in them that sacred power to an extent that God finds worthy to make use of? When Jesus said "Thy sins be forgiven thee"—that word is His most solemn and incontrovertible claim to perfect purity of heart.

And yet, blessed be God! we do find among men, in broken and shadowy lights, this priestliness of innocence. Have you not met such saintly spirits sometimes—once at least—in the course of your pilgrimage? And is it not the case that wherever you meet with genuine innocence in a human soul you are touched and thrilled with a sense of the unearthly? Innocence, pure-heartedness—how do we usually picture it in our minds? Is it not the light falling on the virgin snow-peak through the blue transparency of the sky? Is it not water flowing, unmixed and clear,

from a mountain spring far up among the everlasting hills? Is it not the clear open heaven through which the sparkling stars appear, hidden by no mists of obstruction? Is it not the trembling white light that shines from those stars? When we meet it in a human soul, is it not as if some star with its pale, holy light had lost its way, and wandered down to earth for a little while? God opens in the human soul many a window into Heaven—it may be the gift of a tender love, an aspiration, a thought, an experience, a holy memory. Alas! how we profane and vulgarize them—cast them like pearls upon the dusty roadway of worldly trafficking, to be trodden under foot of men. But purity preserved in a human heart—ah, that is the inner chamber of the soul lighted by a single roof-light, the beautiful screen of reverence drawn around its walls, shutting out all the garish and contaminating lights of earth. And surely the window of this inner chamber is an open casement. When you and I meet such a soul, do we not feel that its innocence is the very air and breath of Heaven? Do we not feel the clean and wholesome fragrance, blowing in through that open casement from off

the fields of Paradise, and then coming forth with its burthen of healing to enter our dusty human lives? Which of us has not known some saintly soul, in whose company we have felt ourselves lifted up for a time, and made better men and women—cleansed of some of life's stains, healed of some of our brokenness, eased of some of our weary load of wretchedness? It was the gracious energy of God's forgiving Spirit, reaching forth a hand to touch us, all unknown to them.

In one of those appealing glimpses of autobiography which he has given to the world, Mark Rutherford tells how the memory of a passing glimpse of a woman's pure face, in the street, came back to him a thousand times in after life, and its sacred beauty judged him, and redeemed him—yea, he uses that tremendous word *redeemed*.

It is precisely the same effect which the Russian Dostoievsky describes in his wonderful story "The Idiot." How the pity and innocence of the central figure of the story cleansed and stilled the sordid, restless atmosphere of the society in which he moved! His presence made

one beautiful sinner imagine she saw in vision, Christ alone with a little child, listening to its confiding talk, " one hand reposing on the child's bright head. His eyes have a far-away expression. Thought great as the Universe is in them—His face is sad. The little one leans its elbow upon Christ's knee, and with its cheek resting on its hand, gazes up at Him, pondering as children sometimes do ponder. . . ." And then, with a sudden impulse of emotion she declares to the man who has wrought this strange effect upon her " You are innocent—and in your innocence lies all your perfection . . . I have renounced the world. You think it strange that I should say so, for you saw me decked with lace and diamonds, in the company of drunkards and wastrels. Let not that perplex you. I know that I have almost ceased to exist. God knows what is dwelling within me now—it is not myself."

Or, may I recall J. K. Jerome's simple and reverent story, " The Passing of the Third-Floor Back " ? As you read of the revolution that sickly young man with his unearthly innocence made in the dingy London boarding-house with its shallow and selfish inmates, you are led

again inevitably and designedly, to think of Christ. Oh, it is not wild, romantic fairy-tale which literature is here essaying to describe. It is the strange, sweet, haunting influence which once shone in undimmed splendour amid life's common ways—and which still lives, passing from land to land, and touching the lives of men through the souls of the Christ-baptized. For, in your own experience, when you have looked into the open countenance, the untroubled eyes of one who neither suspects, nor conceals, nor shuns, nor is jealous, have you not felt the Christly presence too? It is the same character as St. Paul describes in his great rhapsody of love. It thinketh no evil—believes to any extent in the integrity of others. It rejoiceth in the Truth—persists in finding it everywhere, lurking behind human falsehood and sham. It hopeth all things—even of the most hopeless, and goes on hoping to the end.

Perhaps you smile a knowing smile at this, and say, "Oh yes, it is very beautiful, no doubt, but innocence with an inveterate faith in the integrity of others usually ends in getting itself hoaxed and deceived. It's an ineffective, im-

practicable thing.—Yes, but, I persist, it is not the innocence you are passing judgment on when you say that. It was the imperfection, the limitation of the soul in which you found it. Will you stand for a moment with me at this Communion season in the presence of our great High Priest—holy, innocent, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Consider the perfection of that innocence—innocence that looks with clear, searching gaze through all your imperfection—yet innocence with an unlimited, an inexorable, an irrepressible faith in your essential human worth. Does it not completely disarm you, break you down, humiliate you, conquer you, make you what it persists in believing you to be,—bringing your every thought into captivity to His mind by a strange, sweet hypnotism —whenever you allow yourself honestly and sincerely to stand in its sacred presence? Yes, that was how Christ cleansed men and redeemed them, when He took upon Him our humanity, and—before the Cross was thought on—walked the quiet lanes of Palestine, in stainless purity combined with perfect humility and gentleness towards the sinful, waking within them the long-

ing for holiness, for lost purity restored. When they came into His presence they felt all their brokenness drawn out in yearning towards the streams of wholesome influence that radiated through that life. When they felt the tenderness of the clean, strong, comforting hand stretched out to touch them, they felt that a rill had been opened through His soul out of the Unseen; and that the power and the life and the love that flowed towards them through it were the Power and the Life and the Love of God—gracious, healing, cleansing, strengthening,—yea, the very forgiveness of God's heart surging towards them. When He said to this poor, palsied creature, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," He merely made the air vibrate in golden tones of spoken word, with what was a great, surgent, present, blessed fact, the radiant energy of the Alone Pure spending His spirit in perfect, costly consecration to God's supreme desire. When He said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," He said God is at this moment, through the holy passion of My heart, soliciting you to take His forgiveness.

But now I imagine that all the time you have

been waiting expectantly for me to travel further. Let me in one last brief word gratify your wishes. It is Jesus Christ alone Who has the right to speak that word to you and me, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Why? Merely because of the holy innocence of His humanity? Ah, not for that reason alone; but because He pledged His word to God to maintain that innocence unsullied and perfect to the end; and because—oh, this supremely—because He kept His word! Don't you see what that means in a sinful world? That never by a moment's wavering, or want of steadfastness; never by a single false turn or deviation from the way of the Divine Will, should He let that flood of Divine power and love that flowed through the channel won by God through His soul, be lessened or checked or obstructed—why, it meant passion, pain, suffering, agony, sacrifice—all that is gathered up and sealed for us upon the Cross. This was the Divine necessity that Jesus felt, when He said, "The son of man *must* suffer many things": it was the imperious call of the waters of that flood of Grace to keep the way of their approach to men open, even though it cost the uttermost of sacrifice. And the

cost to His love to do it was nothing less than the rushing agony of the forgiving love of God. And the Cross is my surety—it is for ever the world's surety—that Jesus kept His Word to God. And I kneel at the Cross to say, "Son of Man, thou alone hast the right to say with absolute authority 'Thy sins be forgiven thee'; Thou art the Son of God—holy, innocent, undefiled, and separate from sinners, made perfect in thy filial obedience through suffering."

Such an High Priest became us—did He not?

O friend of the sorrowful, reluctant heart, persecuted still with bad passions and evil suggestions, conscious of sin forgiven perhaps, but sadly conscious of its still not wholly broken power, its poison still lurking, working through and tainting all your life, as you look forward to the Table of His remembrance, do you desire anything better to-day than to stand again in the presence of that gentle Innocence that still believes in you, and will not let you go? Then let Him. He is here. Put away your fear, your doubt, your shrinking. Practise the Presence of

Christ. Make it your delight to contemplate the beauty of His holiness, until you feel His influence, His Spirit, breathing upon you, wrapping your soul like an atmosphere. Then in the company of your truest Friend, you will find His purity becoming a kind of investiture round your meaner soul, you will find your baser thoughts being drunk up and lost in the abysses of His nobler nature. Oh, for the day when we have learned to abide in Him perpetually —to make Him our dwelling-house, and not merely our temple to which we only now and then resort. Then and only then will His priestly innocence complete its redeeming work in us. Then and only then will we find the fashion of this world being broken within us, then the memories of it fading, then the diseased longings becoming thoroughly healed, and the debased propensities extirpated at last—at long last. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!" What a hope that is—held out to us by Him who cannot lie! What a hope—that some day the soul shall be infolded, hid with Christ in the recesses of God's pure majesty, with all the heavenly airs of health breathing upon

it and through it, for ever and ever. Is it not a worthy hope for you and me to ponder deeply through this Communion season, kneeling in the presence of our great High Priest? "Every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as He is pure."

THE CONQUEST OF THE CUP:
AN ACTION SERMON.

By Hubert L. Simpson, M.A.

"*In whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant.*"

Genesis xliv. 17.

The Conquest of the Cup

AN ACTION SERMON.

Someone has truly observed that nowadays they that wait upon the Lord tend to invert the prayer of Samuel, saying, "Hear, Lord; for Thy servant speaketh." If at any time it behoves us to get into the right attitude, and listen, it should be at the Holy Communion. It is the Master's own peculiar hour, when He has many things to say to us direct, Himself. What eloquence of appeal—through memory, through experience, through conscience, through love—is there like the appeal of the Broken Bread and the Poured Wine?

And yet it may help us to concentrate upon the message of the Cup if we meditate for a few moments upon this so striking word of our text. I did not choose it: it chose me.

Our fathers heard many a gracious evangelical sermon founded upon the Christlike career and story of Joseph. His selling for twenty pieces of silver suggested the thirty pieces paid by the

priests to Judas. His forgiveness and salvation of his brethren, his humiliation and subsequent exaltation, feature after feature so readily recalled the greater story, that we do not wonder that Joseph set men preaching the Gospel of the love of God in Christ. But did they remember the incident of the cup? I do not recollect that they did.

"Put my cup, the silver cup," said Pharaoh's prime minister, "in the sack's mouth of the youngest." It was a trick. If we did not know the whole story we would add, a shabby trick. But it was inspired by love. It seemed like the giving of unnecessary pain and anguish of mind: it really was the prelude to revelation and glory and joy unspeakable. It was, moreover, contrary to what one might have expected from a surface knowledge of the bare facts, the favourite brother who was made the seeming victim of the damning burden.

Is it not the drama of life as we know it? It seems ever to be those who should be God's favourites, the objects of His tenderest love and care, who are marked out for special anguish and discipline. It is in the sack of the weakest that the terrible discovery is made. The innocence of such is apparent even to the worldly

brethren. The thing seems intolerable. They would not have treated Benjamin so. Judah will even now stand in and bear the unmerited suffering that should fall on him. But no; like inexorable Fate the law of the Egyptian potentate decrees: "The man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my bondman."

1. *The Commitment of the Cup.*

The commitment of the cup none can evade. He in whose sack it is found must bear the blame and suffer the consequences of its being there. A shabby trick, is the quick verdict of the world's rough-and-ready judgment. Joseph has had his joke; let him enjoy it if he can. Let him laugh while his helpless brother weeps. That is all the world can make of it. Our greatest living novelist gives us the outsider's last word on it all in the well-known exclamation, "The President of the Immortals had finished his sport with Tess."

But the teaching of Jesus is just that where the novel ends, the Gospel begins. Joseph had not finished his sport with Benjamin. What seemed on the face of it a cruel, heartless joke, was in reality the careful planning of infinite love.

The end of the joke was the beginning of the justification. Joseph could have let them go away into their own country with bulging sacks, "as much as they can carry," and every man's money in his sack's mouth. And one day the fullest sack would have been empty, and all the money spent, and the owners as hungry and hard bestead as ever. Joseph had a better plan for them than that. He wanted at all costs to bring them back to himself. He had a revelation to make to them, a revelation of love, of power, of infinite resource "exceeding abundant above everything they could ask or think." Yet they would never have known it, their joy would never have been full, had it not been that more was found in Benjamin's sack than corn and coin.

And there it is. If your object in life is to get away with a good full sack of corn, as much as you can carry, and your money in your sack's mouth, well, you may do it; but one day you will be hungry still. And in His infinite mercy, love, and wisdom, He to whom we go in prayer merely to plead, "Give us this day our daily bread," gives us more than that. God does not withhold from us the good things of this life.

The instructions were quite definite to put Benjamin's "corn money" in his sack also. But the cup was the first and most important thing. And if you have found the cup of suffering, the cup of the fellowship of the Man of Sorrows in your sack as well, you will not talk about cruel tricks and complain about an unjust fate. You will say, "The cup which my Elder Brother has put in my sack, shall I not drink it?"

2. *The Comfort of the Cup.*

And so we pass from the thought of the commitment of the cup to that of the comfort of the cup. It was Joseph's steward who slipped that incriminating chalice into the unsuspecting Benjamin's sack. He could do nothing to avoid the consequences. And so it ever is in life. We seem to be perpetually "let in" for things, as we say. Circumstances, accidents, one thing and another seem to shape and control our conduct. The burden is somehow or other laid upon our shoulders, and we have got to bear it. There is this commitment and that, this duty, that care, that bit of work or responsibility—we really don't know how we became saddled with it at all. These things just

seemed to happen. The cup somehow found its way into our sack, and we could not get past that bare fact. How did it get there? We would never have dreamed of taking it. Circumstance, accident, bad luck, we say; not knowing that it was a servant of a higher will that committed us, the servant obeying the behest of a Brother's love, a Brother's plan to bring us to His nearer presence.

Fuller knowledge brings the comfort of the cup. It was Joseph's own cup which he had his servant put in his younger brother's sack. "Steward," Joseph said, "you'll make no mistake about it. It is my own cup I mean. You know it—the silver one, with the heavy chasing." The kiss of his own lips was upon it; the wine of his deep drinking had gleamed in it. Knights of old rode out that they might seek the Cup from which the Saviour of the world had drunk. They counted no loss or suffering too great if only at the end of the long, long quest they might even see the Holy Grail. The cup is not far to seek. It is in our own sack, if so be that we have the privilege of the Brother's love, the Brother's deliberate forethought and plan to bring us closer to Himself.

You remember how, during the War, they tried at first to get our men to sing songs of victory, songs of the might and glory of Britain. But somehow they would not "go." And the marching soldier insisted instead upon singing a seemingly thought-bare snatch about a place that was a long, long way off, but ever held all his heart. I think we all understood that. When the seriousness of fact and the bitterness of experience is heavy on a man, he finds words which through a very thin veil will express the thing that is real and deep and true. That is the difference between theology and religion. Theology is the classic song the authorities try to get us to sing : religion is the little snatch that breaks inevitable and spontaneous and heart-revealing from our lips.

But for a long time I could not understand the grip of that other song about packing up the anguish and carrying it with a smile in the bundle upon one's breaking back. It struck me at first as being a futile idea. It seemed almost un-Christian, seeing that we are directly invited to roll our burden on the Lord and to cast all our care upon Him. To pack up your troubles in

your own kit-bag seemed to me just the one thing that a man should not try to do. And then I came to understand it all. It was the story of the cup in the sack over again, the intimacy of communion, the fellowship of His sufferings.

Alas for us if our sacks are filling up again with corn and money, till there is no room for the cup. "Drink, that you may forget," says the world. "Drink, that you may remember," says Christ. The world puts the sack in the cup, and tries to imagine it is happy. Joseph puts the cup in the sack, and the outcome is joy. As Benjamin packed up the trouble of the cup in his old sack, and plodded back again to Egypt, turning his back, as it must have seemed to him, for ever, upon home and his father's face, bowed down beneath the intolerable commitment of that mysterious burden laid so wantonly upon his innocent shoulders, he was taking, little as he knew it at the moment, the first step to solve the dark problem, and to learn the comfort and the glory of the cup.

3. *The Conquest of the Cup.*

This being so, we pass in the third place to consider the conquest of the cup. At first we

are appalled by the discovery of the commitment of the cup. Then, as we begin to understand what it all means, we pass to the comfort of the cup. It is a prize, not a problem. And, last of all, life takes on its highest meaning when we recognize and bow to the conquest of the cup. "In whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant." Communicants, in your hand the cup is found. The elders are the stewards of a greater than Joseph; and when they put the Elder Brother's own cup into your hand it means that you are Christ's servant for ever. It means that you have got past the devastating conception of life and the discipline of life as a cruel trick of a blind chance. It means that you do not measure your success in Egypt land by a bursting sack and a well-filled purse. Others may be content to speak of the corn in Egypt, but you have found the mystery of the cup; and that abides when the corn is done. The old search for the Grail was bound to be fruitless, because it is not we who find the Cup, but the Cup that finds us. "Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby he indeed maketh trial?" "Behold, this is set for the falling and rising up of many;

that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. A time of sorrow, of loss, of mystery, is always a time of testing. Then it is that the real thoughts of the heart are revealed. If there were nothing found in our sacks but corn we would be as the beasts that perish. It is the discoveries that arrest us in our easy-going ways that reveal of what we are made. The discovery of the cup revealed a changed character in Judah. He was willing now to share the sorrow of his younger brother and to suffer in his stead.

And notice that it was not any kind of incriminating evidence that Joseph ordered his steward to toss into his youngest brother's sack. He might have brought him back to himself again by a hundred different artifices. And there are a hundred devices by which God might break a man's pride and satisfaction in his well-filled sack, and compel him to turn again and seek His face. But He chooses the compulsion of the cup. The Elder Brother bids us turn again by making us sharers of the cup that He has pressed to His own lips. The anguish of heart that Joseph went through when he turned aside to weep was as real as the suffering of the

brothers who knew not all that his wise love was planning and perfecting for them. "In all their affliction He was afflicted." Broken bread and poured-out wine—they are symbols that need no explanation. They are the universal language of the heart bowed down. The African bearers who carried Livingstone in his last illness, and found him dead on his knees in the hut at Ilala, said of him, "He was bad, and on the second morning he was very bad, and on the third he was broken." Broken for them, and they knew it. And they used the universal language, the language of the sacrament of the Supper.

What is it that still turns a caravan of contented corn-dealers, satisfied with their money and their deal, turns them back again to make the supreme discovery of their lives? They are overtaken—it is the word of the story—by some harsh-visaged servant of the higher Will, and arrested in their easy-going contentment. The cup of suffering is found in their own or in their brother's sack. Back under dire compulsion they are driven, the seeming sports of strange and bitter fate. And then they find that the controller of their destinies is no hard and unfriendly stranger.

In a foreign land they find a helper. The features of fate soften into the countenance of a Brother. And there stands no man with Him when He makes Himself known unto His brethren. There stands no man between the communicant and the Elder Brother as He makes Himself known. The silent, intervening steward, who wrought the seeming wrong, withdraws. And as the wondrous meaning of the communion of the cup breaks upon his enlightened soul, as he realizes something of the greatness of that amazing love which shared our sorrow all the while we thought we were the victims of cruel chance, the communicant sings :

> With mercy and with judgment
> My web of time He wove :

and he does not wait till he sees the full glory of Immanuel's land to bless the hand that guides and the heart that plans. The greatest thing he has found in his bundle of life is the Cup. " In whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant." Yea, verily, replies each cup-holding communicant, truly I am Thy servant.

WHAT MEAN YE?

By Lauchlan MacLean Watt, D.D.,
Glasgow Cathedral.

"*And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?*"

Exodus xii. 26.

"*That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?*"

Joshua iv. 6.

What Mean Ye?

I

Looking through the misty dark we see three pictures that arrest our interest.

First, a body of people, gathered, with loins girded for a midnight journey : and the hasty meal of sudden flight passed from hand to hand. Then forward into the unknown they step, their faces set toward the Land of the Promise of God. Varied as the colours of a dream has been that people's history since then. Footsore, hungry, buffeted and bruised, they have been slain in every nation's streets : yet ever, as the time came round, the midnight feast of Egypt, when God clove the darkness asunder for their sakes, has passed, and passes still, from hand to hand. Ask them, "What mean ye by this service?" And they will tell you, "We mean that we do not forget the guiding hand of God—the sorrow of our sins—the promise that He gave—His watching love over our long pilgrimage—and our belief that He is faithful for evermore."

Next, we see the grey boulders set up by Joshua in Jordan's stream—tangibly commemorating the unswerving Providence of God —reminding the people how He had led them through sorrow, conflict, and hardship, into joy and peace : and how the enigma of the future likewise lay with Him. The grey stones told the passing generations how God had walked the waters with them, and had dispelled the mirk from before them with the flame of His love.

And then the curtain drops apart ; and we see a weary Man of Sorrows climbing the stair that leads to an Upper Room : and twelve men with Him, beginning, perhaps, to doubt. That night the traitor's kiss marked out the Master to the mob that sought to murder Him ; and He was led away through bitterness and pain, to the Cross upon the hill. But the scattered group of His disciples grew together again, remembering : and their remembrance made their lives a coherent unity of troth plighted, hearts renewed, and God brought nigh to men. They served the Lord, though now they saw Him not. They lived His message so that the glory of it burned

from them into the souls of all beholding. The mystery of God, Who, to uplift the world, stooped to shame and agony of Calvary, they, through their lives, taught, as a living thing, to men. Their hearts, that had doubted, whispered, wavered, and sinned, they opened wide to the love of the Master ; and they bore them as chalices of the wine of God, through the world, for all. Their service of Him was their declaration that they believed in the continuity of His interest—in the kingship of His love, and in His conquest of sin : that, as they had known Him, so " this same Jesus " should return with victory, bringing them home to a forgiving God : and so they were uplifted over the fear of death and hell. Thus, in Christ, first, were men linked on to God, by remembrance. For He said, " Do not forget Me. And whenever you break this bread and pour forth this wine, think how My body was broken on the Cross, and My blood shed for you." So, at the wayside meal, or at the evening supper, or wherever, stepping aside from labour or the journey, they sought rest, the symbols of His sacrifice shone with intensity of significance.

We can understand that. For *we* set up our memorials also. A little flower, long faded, quickens afresh a love that has never died. A scribbled word, unfinished as the pencil fell from stiffening fingers, carries an inexhaustible message with it to the heart that does not forget. A broken bit of melody, the sound of a bell in the night, a footstep passing by, can recall a sorrow out of the dead years, in one sharp, heart-deep memory. A little cross in the desert, or a handful of pebbles gathered hastily by a comrade, tells so much—pleads so touchingly for remembrance. The lichened boulders on the moors—the cairns all moss-grown in the glens—the column about whose feet surge the busy multitudes—the slab across the pavement of the church, or the window solemnly beautiful with the pathos of art, stir the soul to questionings, make the casual world pause and wonder what they mean. Witnesses to the glimmerings of the dawn of faith—holy with the martyrs' blood—reminders of men and women who made their lives a sacrificial service for the glory of God and the good of their fellows—they all get at that hallowed stillness behind the heart, where

memory has her sanctuary, and where Love sits crowned. They give an inspiration to human thought. They thread all life upon significance.

Remembrance makes life tolerable. The ships sail off over the sleepless waters, and come not back again to us who haunt the wharves. Ringing their passing bells, the hours go forward, like sheeted ghosts, bearing with them so many dreams unfinished, so many loves untold. And what they take into their keeping they hold for ever. And if men ask you why you linger by crumbling houses, and tangled gardens, seeking again to hear old broken phrases of half-remembered tunes—and why you people the mists with presences out of dreams—you tell them, "Because the past is dear. Because, in days that are dead, true hearts beat close to ours. Because the faith that life has not a broken finish, but that God's love is the final shelter of the soul divine, is our strength : and we wait, with memory bringing back old joys along the way of pain."

The thought of dear dead women and dead men is at the basis of a world's nobility of patience, service, duty, and hope. God gets best into the

heart by the door left swinging by the passing of the beloved. The starry majesty of helpful love, the pure delights of kindly service, the sacrifice of perfect courage, are inspired on Pisgah peaks whither true love has led aspiring hearts to behold far visions of higher promise and nobler ends than hitherto achieved and known. Remembrance lifts sorrow upon her heart, and shows her the secret of the things that do not die.

II

There was high genius, indeed, in the simple token which Christ gave to His disciples, whereby their memory of Him should be kept quickly vibrant. And this may be said with all deepest reverence. The vivifying memento involved no long pilgrimage to holy places, nor was it what was costly beyond the resources of the poor, making Christianity either an esoteric cult or a privilege only of the rich. There have been relics that have been unique, the property of a remote or an almost exclusive site. But He took that which should be daily on the table of men's constant need : and as long as human hunger handled bread the mystery of the sacrifice of

Love Divine could never be forgotten. So, that which is the token of mortal hunger became the symbol of the hunger of God—that which is the means of the satisfaction of man's necessity became the mark of the satisfaction of the highest love, which feels Heaven empty till the scattered and wandering children of the Eternal Father are gathered in from the world's dark places and the bitterness of life's sin and sorrow.

There have been, of course, touches of the same purpose in the napkins that have sopped the blood of martyred folk from the pavements and the scaffolds where it fell. But there is more in the memento of Christ than the mere symbol of a body given to death, even in holiest and highest sacrifice. That morsel of crust, that drop of blood-red wine, are the food of faith, the soul's ration in its vigil on the verge of the Eternal. "Not in a corporal or casual manner, but by faith"—as the old catechism says—it feeds the spirit of man with food divine. Faith holds out hands made clean, for the Body of its Lord, and rises from Love's table with the soul's strength renewed in consecrated dedication. There is no need for magic or charlatanry. As Christ's love

is present in the heart that needs Him —as His presence is in the uplifting energy of all noblest thought and deed, beating in the core of sacrifice—so is it in this sacred memorial of His surrender to death itself, that, in His stooping, He might teach men how to rise by the way of the resurrection victory, whose secret lies within the low door of the shadows. Faith, at the Holy Table, grips the promises of God—knows the vital throb of their realization in the Redeemer—turns from that triumphal contact with the Divine to the new interpretation of life in all its significance, as a thing made clean by the blood of Calvary. By it is bridged the abyss between the human and the divine ; and the grace of the eternal is breathed into the tabernacle of clay that is the crumbling tenement of the soul meantime. It is the token of our forgiveness. We sit as guests at the Banquet of the pardon of God. For it is not only a memorial of the death of Christ, but of the fact that He carried our sins in His heart, through the grave, for us, to the mercy of the Father, making atonement for us upon Calvary. All sacrifice of Love is atonement. We have learned in our hearts, in our own time, deeply, the proof of that.

This is an affair of God and of humanity in which every heart has an interest as by right. For Christ said that He died for sinners : and in that word the door of the Upper Room swings wide to the wall ; and every man and woman may surely enter there, to kiss His feet, and wash them with the tears of true repentance. In this all learn the wonder that the life is more than meat, the body than raiment, the soul than its integument—that the material can never be the measure or the substitute of the spiritual—that whatsoever has the smell of the grave upon it can never be of Christ—that God is in His Heaven still—that the fishermen of Galilee have the helm of the world in their hands—that the hope of the earth is in the Crucified. There is nothing that has been, or can be, so universal—so unsectarian. It is the property of no division of the Church. The table of consecrated remembrance and dedication—the table of redeeming mercy—is the Table of Christ, and not of any sect. The flame that was kindled on Calvary burned its way across all the ages, through the cities and the hamlets—through the forests and across the seas—into the hearts of kings and

peasants—into the wisdom of the philosophers and the dreams of the poets—into the warehouse of the merchant and the ship of the trader—into all the work of heart and brain and hand. "Come unto Me," He said, "all ye that labour and are heavy-laden!" "I am come to save the lost—to bring sinners to repentance"—not Presbyterian, or Episcopalian, or Romanist tired ones only, nor sinners of any sect or creed or denomination merely. All the world that is sick of soul finds the straight road that leads to the strait gate; and God's Redeemer, with the wounded hands—the scarred Victor, crowned with the red blossoms gathered from the ultimate limit of His conflict—waiting to receive them. Faith, which is Belief with Trust at the heart of it—knowledge, which has the clue of noblest surrender in its deathless endeavour—Love for God who gave Christ—for Christ who died for it—for the sad ones who have struggled forward, or who have fallen in the struggle—and for itself, bought with the price of God's mercy, making humanity priceless—and a whole vast Repentance, which is that sorrow for sin that flings the foul lodgers of the soul's house

out and bars the door with prayer against their re-entrance—these are the grappling links that give the soul a sure hold on the pardon of the Almighty, at the table of the memorial of a Saviour's sacrifice.

Is there anything that has proved stronger for the uplifting of the world into the presence of God? Is there a new message which the picture-house can give—a secret which the politician has discovered—a mystery which the priest has kept hidden in his cassock—of redemption away from Christ, of love independent of Calvary? Is there a gospel of Glasgow Green, or Trafalgar Square, greater than the Gospel of Nazareth? Is there a brotherhood nobler than that which grips hands round the memory of the Cross? Life has not known it. Death has not heard of it. Love has never found victory in it yet. Nor ever shall. Those who have used their wealth and opportunity for helping their fellow-men to the threshold of divinest grace—those who have consecrated their best manhood and fairest womanhood to service, stooping to lift the putrid and unclean into health of body and soul, and levels of new hope and endeavour—

those who rested not, day or night, till they struck the shackles from the slave, the bondage of lust from the women and children of the slum, and shook the soul free from the slum that sin had made of the human heart, found their inspiration, incentive, and abiding strength from the still moment of dedication at the Table of the remembrance of the Lord. Till we see the atheist, the political agitator, and the crowd who measure life by material advantages, achieve as much, we shall keep in touch with Him whose broken body and life's blood shed awoke a dying world from lethargy of despair and selfishness; and Who still has power to save.

That is why we seek Him, making every place where Faith and Love are waiting, still an Upper Room, where we find what makes us strong enough to face the difficulties of our work-a-day world, and still to become children of the victory, through the remembrance of the Calvary of the pity of Almighty God.

BRISTOL: BURLEIGH LTD., AT THE BURLEIGH PRESS

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

BV
4257.5
A1
C6

Communion addresses / by representative preache
; edited by Frederick J. North. -- London :
J. Clarke, [192-?]
191p. ; 20cm.

1. Communion sermons. 2. Church of England--
Sermons. I. North, Frederick J ed.

CCSC/mmb